

MAIL AND STAGE COACHING
IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE OLD FOUR-IN-HAND DAYS.

Second Edition, with 12 Illustrations in Chromolithography
from Original Paintings by H. Alken, in medium 8vo.
price 21s.

DOWN THE ROAD; or, Reminiscences
of a Gentleman-Coachman. By C. T. S. BIRCH
REYNARDSON.

'A book full of cheery gossip and anecdote about coaching, which is
sure to be read with pleasure by many a veteran to whom it will recall
the past.'

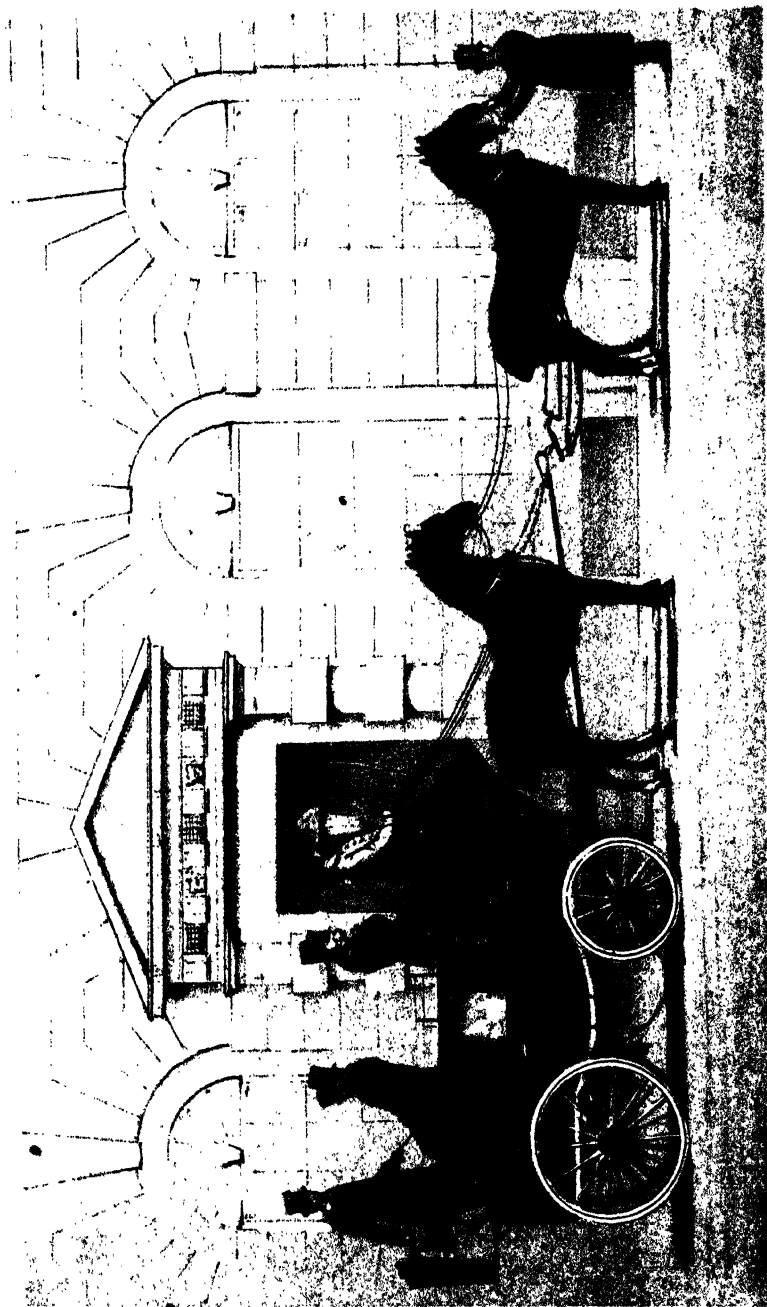
STANDARD.

'Materially assisted by ALKEN's admirable illustrations, as true to
the times as the text, *Down the Road* is sure to find favour with sports-
men.'

FIELD.

London, LONGMANS & CO.

THE DRAG



ANNALS OF THE ROAD

OR

NOTES ON MAIL AND STAGE COACHING
IN GREAT BRITAIN

BY

CAPTAIN MALET

XVIIIth HUSSARS

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

ESSAYS ON THE ROAD, BY NIMROD

FLOREAT RHEDA QUADRIGALIS

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1876

LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

TO THE

RIGHT HON.

LORD JOHN MANNERS, M.P.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL

PREFACE.

A NATURAL FONDNESS for the Road and its associations has induced me, from time to time, to collect notes on all matters in connexion therewith. The recent revival of stage-coaching, and consequently of the art of coachmanship, dating, we may say, from 1866, when the 'Old Times' was put on the Brighton Road, that road having been left vacant by the withdrawal of the 'Age' in 1862, has turned the minds of many to this subject. With a view therefore to assist their enquiries, I publish my collections.

Apart from my desultory notes, Nimrod's treatises on the Road, appended to these collections, give a complete systematic theory of coaching; and my desire that the lover of the Road should have at hand a volume for reference and information induced me to rush into print. For, as Peter Beckford said of hunting, so may it be said of coaching, 'there is no doubt that the practical part of it would be improved were theory to accompany it.' In considering the construction of carriages, friction, motion, gravitation, and velocity are the first subjects which demand the attention of practical coachmen. Of

course there are coachmen and coachmen ; but to those who would become real coachmen, I would earnestly recommend the study of the origin of wheeled conveyances, in the excellent treatise on draught by William Youatt, appended to his work on 'The Horse.' In that treatise will be found most useful and necessary hints, due attention to which would prevent many an accident which might otherwise be caused by ignorance of the simplest mechanical principles. In truth, the properties of carriages are seldom thoroughly understood by those who build them. 'Yet nothing,' it has been well said, 'is more essential for gentlemen who keep a carriage to know, than the various principles on which they may be built to suit their convenience ;'¹ it might have been added—'and that of their horses.'

To become a practical coachman, it is necessary to understand thoroughly the subject of draught by animal power. Direct practical information respecting this will be found in Youatt's treatise. The coachman should carefully peruse, and stow away in his knowledge-boot, the instructions there given regarding the angle of inclination of the line of traction. He will thus learn how to put his horses to, and how to make the most of his moving power. The necessity of acquiring this knowledge will be sufficiently obvious to justify my insisting on the primary importance of mastering the theories of draught and coachbuilding.

Perfection in the practice of driving, too, is only to be

¹ *Fellon on Carriages*, 1796.

attained by attending at the same time to the theory. It is only by being well up in his work, and knowing what he is at, that the tyro can be put on the same footing as 'one of us,' as the old coachman has it.

The name of Nimrod, and the masterly style of his writings on all sporting subjects, are well known; and his essays on 'The Road,' which originally appeared in the form of letters to the 'Sporting Magazine,' and are now reproduced in this volume, will be read with delight by both old and young hands. A careful study of them will enable the tyro to perfect himself in the theory of the art of coachmanship; and the dragsman may learn 'a thing or two' by the perusal of these truly unique essays, now for the first time collected and published in a separate form.

To be a coachman, says Nimrod, you must take your degree; for driving four horses is an art, 'and a very pretty *hart*,' as was said by that excellent coachman 'Chester Billy.' The knowledge necessary to qualify a man for his degree will be found in Nimrod, and by acquiring it the theory of driving will be mastered.

The fact of my residence in India increases in many ways the difficulty of compiling a work of this sort. There comes, moreover, the terrible thought that possibly an opposition coach may have entered on the road at home, and have taken up all the passengers. Still I hope that those of my own 'yard' will be with me, and should the coaching lore which I 'put to' so interest and amuse the reader as to make those drive now who never drove before, and those who always drove now

drive the more¹ (I must apologise for thus rendering Miss Berry), then my 'point' will have hit its object.

I have appended to the work a glossary of terms used in connection with 'The Road.' These, with the specimens of the Road slang which I have given, will be found, I trust, useful and amusing to all lovers of the road. They are really a part—no small part either—of the lessons to be learnt by the aspirant to the 'box.'

I have to offer my very best thanks to Mr. Benthall, of the General Post Office, for aiding me in matters relating to the history of mail coaches, and also to Mr. Nevill, late guard on the Carlisle mail. I am much indebted to Mr. Gould of the G.P.O. for the use of his pictures of the different mails in snow storms.

BANGALORE, INDIA: *December 1874.*

¹ Like Tommy, the eccentric Lord Onslow, of whom George Selwyn said:—

Little Tommy Titmouse, what can he do?
Drive a phaeton and two.
What can little Tommy do more?
Drive a phaeton and four.

This jest was first broached in a box at the Opera house; and Lady Bridget Tollemache immediately observed, 'Little Tommy, then, has changed from On-slow to On-fast.'

Mediocre, though, if from a wit professed,
The listening world content repeats the jest.

CONTENTS.



| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. EARLY COACH-TRAVELLING | 1 |
| II. COMMON STAGES AND HACKNEY COACHES | 5 |
| III. STAGE-COACHES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY | 9 |
| IV. HER MAJESTY'S STATE COACH. NAPOLEON'S COACH | 15 |
| V. ROADS AND RATE OF SPEED | 21 |
| VI. JOHN PALMER AND THE MAIL COACH SYSTEM | 25 |
| VII. REGULATIONS | 30 |
| VIII. FURTHER REGULATIONS. DE QUINCY ON COACHING | 36 |
| IX. PROCESSION OF MAILS ON THE KING'S BIRTHDAY | 40 |
| X. USE OF THE KEY BUGLE | 43 |
| XI. WORK AND WAGES OF GUARDS. DRIVING CLUBS | 49 |
| XII. DANGERS OF THE ROAD | 55 |
| XIII. THE WHITE HORSE CELLAR, PICCADILLY. SHORT STAGES | 64 |
| XIV. COACHING IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND | 68 |
| XV. PETER PRY'S LETTER. COACHMEN. YARDS | 71 |
| XVI. WASHINGTON IRVING'S PORTRAIT OF A STAGE-COACHMAN | 84 |
| XVII. JOHN DAY, A PATHETIC BALLAD | 87 |
| XVIII. ASCOT | 90 |

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| XIX. THE GREAT WESTERN ROAD | 95 |
| XX. COACHING ON MAY DAY. BEARING REINS | 101 |
| XXI. THE BRIGHTON ROAD | 104 |
| XXII. THE BRIGHTON ROAD— <i>continued</i> | 113 |
| XXIII. THE BRIGHTON ROAD— <i>concluded</i> | 120 |
| XXIV. SIR JOHN FAGG | 127 |
| XXV. ODE TO DRAGSMEN | 134 |
| XXVI. MEMORIES AND REGRETS | 137 |
| XXVII. ON ACCIDENTS | 142 |
| XXVIII. A CHAPTER OF ANECKOTES | 151 |
| XXIX. A DRIVE ON THE GREAT WESTERN ROAD | 160 |
| XXX. MR. JACOB'S INVENTION | 163 |
| XXXI. REVIVAL OF COACHING | 165 |
| XXXII. RETROSPECTIVE | 172 |
| <hr/> | |
| ESSAYS BY NIMROD | 177 |
| THE DAWN OF COACHING | 180 |
| ON HARNESSING | 184 |
| POLING-UP AND BREECHINGS | 199 |
| LONG AND SHORT WHEEL-REINS | 209 |
| STANHOPES AND FASHIONABLE CARRIAGES | 218 |
| BEARING-REINS, FAST COACHES, AND LINCH-PINS | 231 |
| ON COACHMEN | 246 |
| THE B. D. C., AND FOUR-HORSE CLUB | 271 |
| ON ACCIDENTS | 290 |
| NIGHT WORK | 310 |
| LAMPS | 313 |

CONTENTS.

xiii

ESSAYS BY NIMROD—*continued.*

PAGE

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| ROADS | 316 |
| COACHES | 323 |
| USE OF THE WHIP | 328 |
| DIRECTIONS FOR DRIVING | 336 |
| NIGHT WORK | 346 |
| COACH HORSES | 348 |
| YOUNG HORSES | 355 |
| WAGES AND COACHMEN | 358 |
| GUARDS | 366 |
| GENTLEMEN-COACHMEN | 372 |

APPENDICES.

| | |
|---|-----|
| A. SOME ROAD SLANG TERMS | 389 |
| B. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAIL-GUARDS | 397 |
| C. NAMES OF ROADS, WITH THE STANDARDS FROM WHICH THEY ARE MEASURED | 402 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

COLOURED PLATES.

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| DUKE OF BEAUFORT'S DRAG | <i>Frontispiece</i> |
| A STAGE COACH | <i>To face p. 9</i> |
| A MAIL COACH | ,, 32 |
| THE HOLYHEAD AND CHESTER MAILS AT HOCKLEY HILL, NEAR DUNSTABLE, ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1836 (J. WOOD AND W. HOOK, <i>guards</i>) | ,, 62 |
| 'BULL AND MOUTH' YARD | ,, 80 |
| THE DEVONPORT MAIL NEAR AMESBURY GOING POST THROUGH A DRIFT OF SNOW ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1836 (F. FEACHAM, <i>guard</i>) | ,, 100 |
| THE BIRMINGHAM MAIL NEAR AYLESBURY. THE GUARD, W. PRICE, PROCEEDING WITH THE BAGS. MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1836 | ,, 132 |
| THE LIVERPOOL MAIL NEAR ST. ALBANS ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1836 (JAMES BURDETT, <i>guard</i>) | ,, 150 |
| THE MAILS MEETING—'GOOD-NIGHT' | ,, 237 |
| THE RESULT OF FEATHER-EDGING | ,, 376 |

WOODCUTS.

| | |
|--|-----|
| BRAKE HANDLES AND BRAKE BLOCKS | 147 |
| MR. JACOB'S INVENTION | 164 |
| COACH UNDERCARRIAGE | 392 |

ANNALS OF THE ROAD.



CHAPTER I.

EARLY COACH TRAVELLING.

THE classical era of coachmanship is well described, and details concerning the mode of putting horses together at that period are given, in Nimrod's and Youatt's treatises ; and but little real advance seems to have been made in the science of the road until the middle of the seventeenth century. Gibbon certainly records an instance of early post travelling which almost transcends the brightest achievements of our English service, even in the palmiest days of mail coaches. Cæsarius, a magistrate of high rank in the time of the Emperor Theodosius, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia, 165 miles from Antioch, on the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople on the sixth day about noon ; the whole distance being 725 Roman, or 665 English miles. It is worthy of mention that Cicero, writing to a friend in Britain, remarked that there was nothing worth bringing out of the island but chariots, of which he wished to have one for a pattern.

This statement, I think, warrants us islanders in flattering ourselves that we take precedence in coaching of all the world. Wheel carriages, bearing some resemblance to chariots, first came into use in England in the reign of King Richard II., about the year 1388. They were called whirlicotes, and were little better than litters or cotes (cots) placed on wheels. We are told by Master John Stowe¹ that 'Richard II. being threatened by the rebels of Kent, rode from the Tower of London to the Miles End, and with him his mother, because she was sick and weak, in a whirlicote.' This is described as an ugly vehicle of four boards put together in a clumsy manner; so clumsily that, on occasion of the grand entry of Richard II. into London, described by Richard de Maidstone, we learn that when the ladies of the Court were riding in two of these carts, one of them fell over and 'exposed its fair occupants in a not very decorous manner to the jeers of the multitude.' At the celebration of the feast of St. George at Windsor in 1487 (3 Henry VII.), we are told that the Queen and the King's mother rode in a chaise covered with a rich cloth of gold.

We may judge of the state of the road in the sixteenth century from the means of conveyance then used by the wealthiest and noblest family in England, that of the fifth Earl of Northumberland. In the establishment of this nobleman in 1512, there were, as Berenger tells us, 'seven great trottyng hors to draw in the chariott, and a nagg for the chariott-man to ride.' The chariott or car was a vehicle in various forms, but far inferior to the chariot

¹ 'Surveye of London and Westminster.'

or coach in common use, in which the furniture or movables were conveyed, or perchance, the domestic servants of the family. The Lord and Lady usually rode on horseback. They had slow-paced heavy horses, perhaps not much unlike the carriage horses of a century ago, which drew the plough all the week and took the family to church on Sunday. It must not be forgotten that the chariot-man or coachman then used to ride by the side of the horses, and so conducted them and the carriage).

In the twenty-second year of Queen Elizabeth the use of coaches¹ (private carriages) became more general. The heads of noble houses, nevertheless, in their travels, almost from one end of the kingdom to the other, still rode on horseback, except when they took refuge, as they occasionally did, in the cars generally appropriated to their household. Even the Queen when she went in state to St. Paul's rode behind her Master of the Horse. The convenience of the new mode of carriage caused it to be immediately adopted by all who could afford it; and horses were so rapidly bought up for this purpose, and became so exorbitantly dear, that the question was discussed in Parliament whether the use of carriages should not be confined to the higher classes.

Stowe, in his 'Surveye,' speaking of the same era,

¹ The word coach, if derived from *caroche* (*carosse*, *caroccio*), signifies a large car or waggon. Menage makes it Latin, and by far-fetched derivations traces it from *vehiculum*. Junius derives it from *οχεω*, to carry. Wachter seeks its origin in the obsolete German word *kutten*, to cover. Some say the word is of Hungarian extraction, taking its origin from the village of Kitsee (Kotsee or Cotzi). There certainly was a Hungarian carriage known in the sixteenth century, and it was a covered carriage too.

tells us that 'divers great ladies made them coaches, and rode in them up and down the countries to the great admiration of all beholders.' The fashion soon spread ; and Stowe adds, what is often true in the present day, 'The world runs on wheels with many whose parents were glad to go on foot.' These coaches were heavy and unwieldy, and probably bore some rough resemblance to the state coaches still used occasionally in Court processions.

At this period there were but one or two main roads, and these were infested by bands of robbers ; a fact which made travelling in carriages much more insecure, as well as more difficult, than performing the journey on horseback.

The first hollow turning coach built for Queen Elizabeth, by Walter Ripon, was nothing but a cart without springs, covered over with a gorgeous canopy, and with chairs or seats fixed in it. Ripon does not seem to have greatly promoted coaching by his invention, for the Queen suffered so much during her journey in his coach when she went to open Parliament, that she would never use it again. Consequently the coach went out of fashion in London, though the county gentry seem to have patronised it.

The Queen's coachman, one Bonner, a Dutchman, did a great deal in 1564 towards bringing coaches into use ; and his style of 'conveniency' was greatly improved upon by the Earl of Arundel in 1580.

CHAPTER II.

COMMON STAGES AND HACKNEY COACHES.

THE introduction of a regular system of carrying by what are known as 'common stages' and 'hackney coaches,'¹ is noted by Fynes Moryson, who, in his 'Ten Years of Travel through Great Britain and other Parts of Europe,' published in 1617, says: 'Sixty years ago coaches were very rare in England,' but in his own day, pride was so far increased that there were few gentlemen of any account (i.e. 'elder brothers,' as he parenthetically explains), 'who had not their coaches, so that the streets of London were stopped up with them.'

We have ample evidence from other sources of the annoyances caused to the ordinary dwellers in London by the great amount of coach traffic through the narrow

¹ The term 'hackney coach' is of French origin. In France a strong kind of cob horse (*hackn  e*) was let out on hire for short journeys. These were latterly harnessed, to accommodate several wayfarers at once, to a plain vehicle called *coche-  hackn  e*—hence the name. The legend that traces their origin to Hackney, near London, is a vulgar error. They were first licensed in 1662, and were at the same time subjected to regulations. The number plying in London was fixed at 1,000. The fares were raised in 1771. The number of coaches was increased in 1799, and frequently since. The coachmakers became subject to a license in 1785, and the hackney chariots, coaches, and cabriolets in 1814.

thoroughfares, and many methods were suggested of abating the nuisance.

In 1619 a tax of 40*l.* a year (which was then equivalent to 200*l.* at least of our present currency) was supposed to be levied on all persons below a certain degree who kept a coach. In January 1635–36, King Charles I. found it necessary to issue a Proclamation ‘for restraint of the multitude and promiscuous use of coaches about London and Westminster.’ From the terms of this document we gather that the great number of hackney coaches in London and Westminster, and the general use of coaches, had become a great nuisance to the King, the Queen, the nobility and others of place and degree in their passage through the streets. The streets were also so ‘pestered,’ and the pavement so broken up, that the common passage was hindered and made dangerous, and the prices of hay and provender were alarmingly high. These coaches for hire did not stand in the street, but at the principal inns.

His Majesty therefore commanded that no hackney coach should be used, except to travel three miles out of London; and that no person should go in a coach in the streets of London, unless he kept four horses for his Majesty’s service whenever his occasions should require. This prohibition was not enforced after the King’s death. In 1637 there were in London and Westminster fifty hackney coaches.

For the most part, says Moryson, Englishmen, especially in long journeys, used to ride upon their own horses; for hired horses, two shillings was paid for the

first day and eighteen-pence for each succeeding day that the horse was required by the traveller. Lastly, the carriers had long covered waggons, in which they carried passengers from city to city ; but this kind of journeying is described as so tedious, that none but women and people of inferior condition, or strangers (among whom he particularly instances the Flemings, their wives and servants), avail themselves of it.

It was in 1619 that the Duke of Buckingham set the example of being drawn by six horses. The Earl of Northumberland, partly not to be outdone, and partly out of ridicule, immediately began to drive eight, which in this day no one in England but Queen Victoria may do.

In 1640, the Dover Road, owing to the extent of Continental traffic constantly kept up, was perhaps the best in England. Yet three or four days were often consumed in the journey between Dover and London.

Chamberlayn in his 'Present state of Great Britain' (1649), thus speaks up for stage coaches : ' Besides the excellent arrangement of conveying men and letters on horseback, there is of late such an admirable commodiousness, both for men and women to travel from London to the principal towns in the country, that the like hath not been known in the world : and that is by stage coaches, wherein anyone may be transported to any place sheltered from foul weather and foul ways, free from endamaging of one's health and one's body by hard jogging or over-violent motion ; and this not only at a low price (about a shilling for every five miles) but with

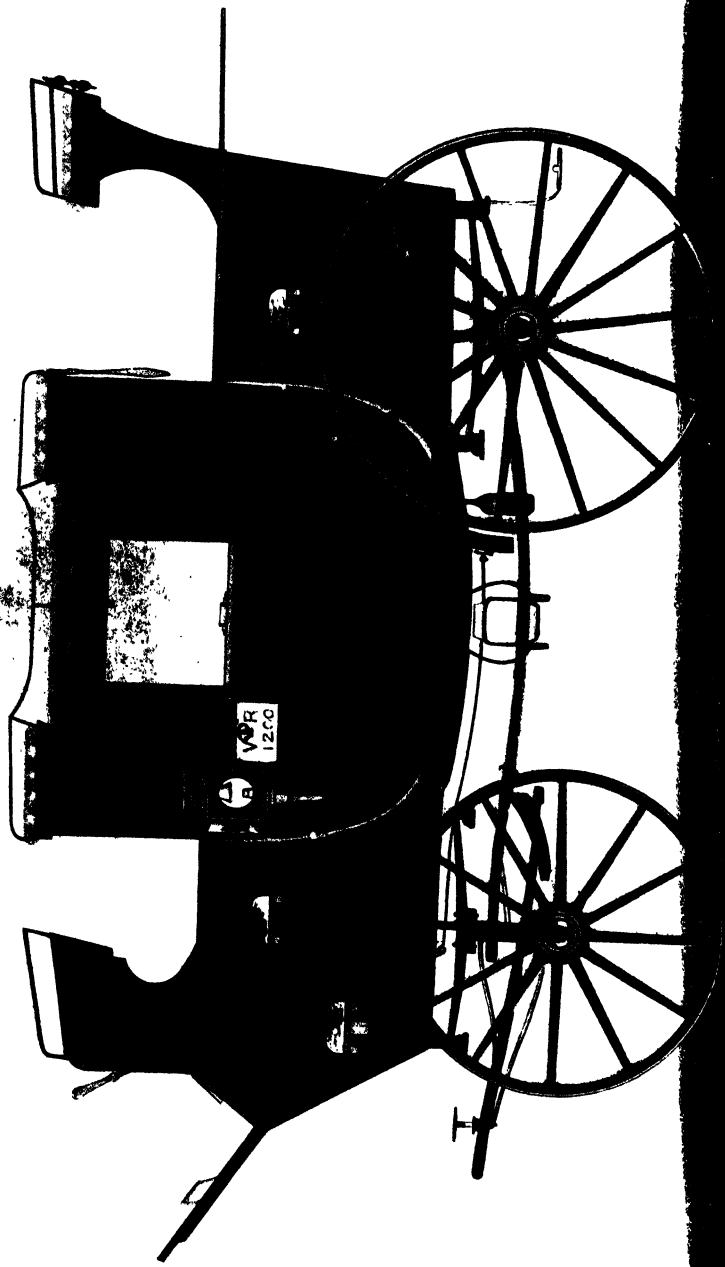
such velocity and speed in one hour as that the post in some foreign countries cannot make in one day.'

In 1662, when there were still only six stage coaches in the whole kingdom, one John Crossel, of the Charter House, London, took alarm and wrote a pamphlet demanding the suppression of these conveyances, on the ground that they would inflict a serious injury on society.

Some of his reasons are curious. 'These coaches,' says he, 'make gentlemen to come to London upon very small occasion, which otherwise they would not do but upon urgent necessity; nay, the conveniency of the passage makes their wives often come up, who rather than come such long journeys on horseback, would stay at home. Here, when they come to town, they must go in the mode, get fine clothes, go to plays and treats, and by these means get such a habit of idleness and love of pleasure, that they are uneasy ever after.'

THE STAGE COACH

ANNAE 174



CHAPTER III.

STAGE COACHES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

STAGE COACHING became general between the years 1662 and 1703. The stage coaches running between London and York, Chester, and Exeter, at this period did not run at all during winter, but were laid up for the season like ships during arctic frosts, and were what we now call 'butterflies.' Sometimes the roads were so bad, even in summer, that it was all the horses could do to drag the coach alone, the passengers having perforce to walk for miles together. In the case of the York coach especially the difficulties were formidable. Not only were the roads bad, but the low Midland counties were especially liable to floods; and during their prevalence it was nothing unusual for passengers to remain at some town *en route* for days together, until the roads were dry.

Public opinion was divided as to the merits of stage coach travelling. When the new mode threatened altogether to supersede the old mode of travelling on horseback, great opposition manifested itself; and the organs of public opinion began to revile the new. One pamphleteer went so far as to denounce the introduction of stage coaches as the greatest evil 'that had happened of late years in these kingdoms;' 'mischievous to the public, prejudicial to trade, and destructive to lands.' 'Those who travel in these coaches contract an idle habit of body, become weary and listless when they have rode

a few miles, and are then unable to travel on horseback, to endure frost, snow, or rain, or *to lodge in the fields.*'

So tedious indeed, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was the communication between one place and another, that a letter from Yorkshire to Oxford could scarcely be answered in less than a month.¹

A hundred years later, about 1703, the journey from London to Portsmouth occupied about fourteen hours, and whether it could be accomplished even in this time depended on the state of the roads.

The York stage, a four-day coach, began running on Friday, April 12, 1706. The following notice was issued of its establishment :—



ALL that are desirous to pass from LONDON to YORK, or any other place on their road, let them repair to the 'BLACK SWAN,' HOLBORN, in LONDON, and the 'BLACK SWAN' in CONEY STREET, YORK, at both which places they may be received in a STAGE COACH every MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY, which performs the whole journey in four days (if God permits), and sets forth at five in the morning, and returns from York to Stamford in two days, and Stamford to Huntingdon in two days more, and the other like stages on their return, allowing each passenger 14 pounds weight, and all above 3 pence per pound.

Performed by { B. KINGMAN.
H. HAINSFORD.
W. BAYNES.

¹ 'Scrapbook,' by Doctor Robert Chambers.

The old stage or travelling waggon, which was used for the conveyance of passengers and merchandise, deserves some notice. On the principal roads, strings of stage-waggons used to travel together. Besides these conveyances there were 'strings of horses,' pack-horses, travelling somewhat quicker than the waggons, for the conveyance of light goods, or passengers, and generally on narrow paths known as 'pack-horse roads.' One of these pack-horse roads of 200 years ago may still be seen in a good state of preservation about a mile eastward from Haltwhistle in Northumberland. It adjoins the old mail coach road, and is within a hundred yards of the railway. Thus brought within a stone's throw of each other are pack-horse road, coach-road, and rail, marking the changes which a couple of centuries have wrought in the means of locomotion. The stage waggons, as a rule, travelled at an extremely slow pace; and except on the Liverpool and London road, they seldom changed horses, but used the same teams throughout. The pace indeed was proverbially so slow in the North of England, that it was jocularly said that the publicans of Furness in Lancashire, when they saw the conductors of the travelling-merchandise trains appear in sight, on the summit of Wrynose Hill, on their way between Whitehaven and Kendal, would begin to brew their beer, always having a stock of good drink manufactured by the time the travellers reached the village!

It was long after the invention of coaches that a coach-box was added to the body. 'The coachman' says Mr. Strutt, 'joineth a horse, fixed to match a saddle-

horse to the coach tree, then he sitteth upon the saddle, and when there were four horses he drove those which went before him, guiding them with a rein.'

In 1742 the Oxford stage used to leave London at seven A.M., arrived at Uxbridge at midday, and at High Wycombe at five P.M. ; here they slept, and thence proceeded to Oxford the next day. The Dover stage was started in March 1751, as appears from the copy of an advertisement on opposite page in the 'London Evening Post' of that date. It will be seen that nearly two days were then occupied in the journey from London to Dover. This coach probably became afterwards a day coach, continuing its journey through from Canterbury, and it may have been the first day coach to Dover.

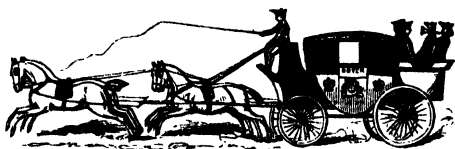
No passengers were then carried on the roof ; and the conveniency referred to behind the coach was evidently the basket in vogue for many years afterwards.

As early as 1754 a company of merchants in Manchester started a new vehicle called 'The Flying Coach' ; which designation it seems to have owed to the fact that its proprietors contemplated running it at the accelerated speed of about five miles an hour. Its pretensions are set forth in the following terms :—

'However incredible it may appear, this coach will actually (barring accidents) arrive in London in four days and a half after leaving Manchester.'

A hundred and twenty years ago there was no regular stage coach from London to Edinburgh, and the Scottish newspapers occasionally contained advertisements, stating that an individual about to proceed to the metropolis by

(Copy). 'London Evening Post,' March 28, 1751.



A STAGE COACH

WILL SET OUT

For DOVER every WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY from CHRISTOPHER SHAW'S, the 'GOLDEN CROSS,' at four in the morning, to go over Westminster Bridge to ROCHESTER to dinner, to CANTERBURY at night, and to DOVER the next morning early ; will take passengers for

ROCHESTER, SITTINGBOURNE, OSPRINGE, AND
CANTERBURY,

And returns on TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS.

By { THOS. HARTCUP.
ROBT. LEGEY.
{ RICHD. STRADWICK.
CATH. PORDADGE.

☞ There will be a conveniency behind the coach for baggage and outside passengers.

a post-chaise, would be glad to hear of a fellow-adventurer or two, that, by mutual assistance the expense of the journey might be diminished. Before 1754, however, a stage coach was established on the route between the two British capitals ; and in the Edinburgh 'Courant' for that year it was announced by advertisement that :—



THE EDINBURGH STAGE COACH

For the better accommodation of passengers, will be altered to a new genteel two-end glass coach machine, being on steel springs, exceeding light, and easy to go in ten days in summer and twelve in winter ; to set out the

FIRST TUESDAY IN MARCH,

And continue it, from HOSEA EASTGATE'S, the 'COACH AND HORSES,' in DEAN STREET, SOHO, LONDON, and from JOHN SOMERVILLE'S, in the CANONGATE, EDINBURGH, every other TUESDAY, and meet at BURROW BRIDGE on SATURDAY NIGHT, and set out from thence on MONDAY MORNING, and get to LONDON and EDINBURGH on FRIDAY. In winter to set out from LONDON to EDINBURGH every other (alternate) MONDAY MORNING, and to go to BURROW BRIDGE on SATURDAY NIGHT. Passengers to pay as usual.

Performed, if God permits, by
Your dutiful servant,
HOSEA EASTGATE.

The year 1757 saw another 'flying machine on steel springs' established by the merchants of Liverpool after the example of the Manchester 'Flying Coach.' It was designed to beat, and did beat, the Manchester coach in point of speed, three days only being allowed from Liverpool to London. Sheffield and Leeds followed with their respective fly coaches; and by 1784 these vehicles had become quite common and did their eight miles an hour.

CHAPTER IV.

HER MAJESTY'S STATE COACH. NAPOLEON'S CHARIOT.

WHAT the art of the coach-builder could achieve when stimulated to its highest efforts by the ambition of pleasing royalty, is illustrated by the following description of Her Majesty's state coach. It was built for King George III., and was finished in the year 1761, being the most superb carriage ever built. It was designed by Sir William Chambers, and was executed under his direction. The paintings were executed by Cipriani. The front panel, Britannia seated on a throne, holding in her hand a staff of Liberty, attended by Religion, Justice, Wisdom, Valour, Fortitude, Commerce, Plenty, and Victory, presenting her with a garland of laurels; in the background a view of St. Paul's and the river Thames. The right door, Industry and Ingenuity giving a cornucopia to the Genius of England. The panels on each side of the right door, History, recording the reports of Fame, and Peace, burning the implements of war. The back panel, Neptune and Amphitrite issuing from their palace in a triumphant car, drawn by sea-horses attended by the Winds, Rivers, Tritons, Naiads, &c., bringing the tribute of the world to the British shore. Upper part of back

panel is the Royal Arms, beautifully ornamented with the Order of St. George, the rose, shamrock and thistle entwined. The left door, Mars, Minerva and Mercury supporting the Imperial Crown of Great Britain. The panels on each side of left door, the Liberal Arts and Sciences protected. The front and four quarter panels over the paintings are plate glass. The whole of the carriage and body is richly ornamented with laurel and carved work, beautifully gilt. The length twenty-four feet, width eight feet three inches, height twelve feet, length of pole twelve feet four inches, weight four tons. The carriage and body of the coach is composed as follows :—Of four large Tritons which support the body by four braces covered with red moroco leather, and ornamented with gilt buckles. The two figures placed in front of the carriage bear the driver, and are represented in the action of drawing, by cables extending round their shoulders, and the cranes and sounding shells to announce the approach of the Monarch of the Ocean ; and those at the back carry the imperial fasces topped with tridents. The driver's foot-board is a large scallop shell, ornamented with bunches of reeds and other marine plants. The pole represents a bundle of lances ; the splinter bar is composed of a rich moulding issuing from beneath a voluted shell, each end terminating in the head of a dolphin ; and the wheels are imitated from those of the ancient triumphal chariot. The body of the coach is composed of eight palm trees, which branching out at the top, sustain the roof ; and the four trees at the angles are loaded with trophies, alluding to the victories obtained

by Great Britain during the late glorious war, supported by four lions' heads. On the centre of the roof stand three boys representing the Genii of England, Scotland, and Ireland, supporting the Imperial Crown of Great Britain; and holding in their hands the sceptre, sword of state, and ensigns of knighthood; their bodies are adorned with festoons of laurels which fall from thence towards the four corners. The inside of the body is lined with rich scarlet embossed velvet, superbly laced and embroidered with gold as follows: In the centre of the roof is the star encircled by the collar of the Order of the Garter, and surmounted by the Imperial Crown of Great Britain; pendant, the George and Dragon; in the corners, the rose, shamrock and thistle entwined. The hind lounge is ornamented with the badge of the Order of St. Michael and St. George; and on the front the badge of the Guelph and Bath ornamented with the rose, shamrock and thistle. The hind seat fall has the badge of St. Andrew, and on the front, the badge of St. Patrick, adorned with the rose, shamrock, thistle, and oak leaf. The hammer-cloth is of the same costly materials. The harness, for eight horses, is made of red morocco leather, and decorated with blue ribbons, the Royal Arms and other ornaments richly gilt.

The following was the 'little bill' for the same:—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|----------------------|-------|----|----|
| Coachmaker | 1,637 | 15 | 0 |
| Carver | 2,500 | 0 | 0 |
| Gilder | 935 | 14 | 0 |
| Painter | 315 | 0 | 0 |

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--------------------------|-------|----|-----|
| Laceman | 737 | 10 | 7 |
| Chaser | 665 | 4 | 6 |
| Harness-maker | 385 | 15 | 0 |
| Mercer | 202 | 5 | 10½ |
| Beltmaker | 99 | 6 | 6 |
| Milliner | 31 | 3 | 4 |
| Saddler | 10 | 16 | 6 |
| Woollen Draper | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| Cover maker | 3 | 9 | 6 |
| | 7,562 | 4 | 3½ |

This coach is still used when Her Majesty goes in state, and is drawn by eight cream-coloured horses. It is kept in the Royal Mews, Pimlico.

As a good pendant to the above description of Her Majesty's state coach, I give the following account of Buonaparte's travelling chariot. Though rather off the coaching road, it may furnish hints to those who wish to have a 'convenient' carriage. The chariot was taken at Waterloo, and was presented to the Prince Regent, by whom it was afterwards sold to Mr. Bullock for 2,500*l*. It eventually found its way to the same Tus-saud's Waxwork Exhibition, where it may be seen.

This very curious and convenient chariot of the first Emperor was built by Symons of Brussels for the Russian campaign, and is adapted for the various purposes of a pantry and a kitchen; for it has places for holding and preparing refreshments, which by the aid of a lamp could be heated in the carriage. It served also for a bedroom, a dressing-room, an office, &c. The seat is divided into two by a partition about six inches high.

The exterior of this ingenious vehicle is of the form and dimensions of our large English travelling chariot, except that it has a projection in front of about two feet, the right-hand half of which is open to the inside to receive the feet, thus forming a bed, while the left-hand half contained a store of various useful things.

Beyond the projection in front, and nearer to the horses, was the seat for the coachman, ingeniously contrived so as to prevent the driver from viewing the interior of the carriage, and yet so placed as to afford those within a clear sight of the horses and of the surrounding country. Beneath this seat is a receptacle for a box about two feet and a half in length and four inches deep, containing a bedstead of polished steel, which could be fitted up in a couple of minutes.

Over the front windows is a roller blind of strong painted canvas, which when pulled out excluded rain while it admitted air. (This might be an advantageous appendage to all carriages.)

On the ceiling of the carriage is a network for carrying small travelling requisites. In a recess there was a secrétaire, ten inches by eighteen, which contained nearly a hundred articles presented to Napoleon I. by Maria Louisa, under whose care it was fitted up with every luxury and convenience that could be imagined. It contained besides the usual requisites for a dressing box, most of which were of solid gold—a magnificent breakfast service with plates, candlesticks, knives, forks, spoons, a spirit lamp for making breakfast in the carriage, gold case for Napoleon's gold wash-hand basin, a number

of essence bottles, perfumes, and an almost infinite variety of minute articles down to pins, needles, thread, and silk. Each of these articles was fitted into recesses most ingeniously contrived, and made in the solid wood, in which they were packed close together, and many one within the other, in such a narrow space that on seeing them arranged it appeared impossible for them ever to be put into so small a compass. At the bottom of this toilet box, in divided recesses, were found 2,000 gold napoleons; on the top of it were writing materials, a looking-glass, combs, &c., a liqueur case which had two bottles, one of Malaga wine, the other of rum, a silver sandwich box containing a plate, knives, spoons, pepper and salt boxes, mustard pot, decanter, glasses, &c.; a wardrobe, writing desk, maps, telescopes, arms, &c., a large silver chronometer, by which the watches of the army were regulated, two merino mattresses, a green velvet travelling cap, also a diamond head-dress (tiara), hat, sword, uniform, and an Imperial mantle, &c.

CHAPTER V.

ROADS AND RATE OF SPEED.

IN illustration of the usual speed of travelling in 1766, Lord Eldon states that when he left school in that year to go to Oxford, he came up from Newcastle to London in a coach which was called 'a fly,'¹ on account of its quick travelling, as it was then thought, but he was three or four days and nights upon the road. There was no such velocity as to endanger overturning or other mischief; and as a sort of apology for its pace there was printed on the panel of the carriage the phrase *Sat cito, si sat bene*. The impression made by this sentence upon the mind of the embryo chancellor was heightened by a circumstance which occurred upon the journey. A Quaker fellow-traveller called the chambermaid to the coach door and gave her sixpence, telling

¹ The continued application of the term 'fly' to coaches may have been suggested by the following circumstances: In 18c8 a Brighton carpenter, employed at the Pavilion Stables, injured himself, and on his recovery he made a seat on wheels to be drawn about on. The Prince Regent, seeing it, ordered one like it, and this was used by him and his friends in their larks at night. They named it jocosely a fly-by-night. When the carpenter sent the pattern to London with an order for more, the coachbuilder made one for a horse to draw. To this also the designation of a fly was given.

her that he forgot to give it to her when he slept there two years before. Young Scott, who was not characterised by overmuch bashfulness, said to him : ' Friend, have you seen the motto on this coach ? ' ' No ! ' ' Then look at it, for I think giving her only sixpence *now* is neither *sat cito*, nor *sat bene*.'

The state of the roads and of the means of communication are forcibly and graphically, if not elegantly, depicted by Arthur Young, who travelled in Lancashire about the year 1770. ' I know not,' he says, ' in the whole range of language, terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal road. Let me most seriously caution all travellers who may accidentally propose to travel this terrible country to avoid it as they would the devil, for a thousand to one they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings-down. They will here meet with ruts, which I actually measured, four feet deep, and floating with mud, only from a wet summer, what therefore must it be after a winter ? The only mending it receives is tumbling in some loose stones, which serves no other purpose than jolting a carriage in the most intolerable manner. These are not merely opinions but facts, for I actually passed three carts broken down in these eighteen miles of execrable memory.' Subsequently, in speaking of a turnpike road near Warrington, he says, ' This is a paved road most infamously bad. Any person would imagine the people of the country had made it with a view to immediate destruction, for the breadth is only sufficient for one carriage, consequently it is cut at once with ruts, and you

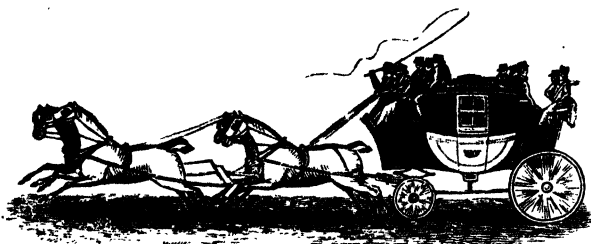
may easily conceive what a breakdown, dislocating road, with ruts cut through a pavement must be.' Such was the style of travelling in Britain about a century ago from the time we write. Truly may we say, '*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.*' Mr. Crossel's denunciations of stage coaches in 1662 met with no more respect than the tirade against the introduction of railways in our own times. From a newspaper of the year 1779, we learn that regular post coaches, as they are called, had begun to run, or we might say creep, from London to Scotland. We find the advertisement on the next page in the newspaper in question.

When we consider that these coaches had no springs we cannot wonder at the journey being 'very tiring.'

Carriages at this period were built and made use of under strange conditions. In illustration I may mention the fact that my great-grandfather, who resided in Somersetshire, wishing to have a coach built in London, was obliged to send the coachbuilder the measurement between the ruts of his roads, that he might have his wheels arranged to run in them. This was the first carriage seen in his part of the world.

King George III. presented a state coach to the Emperor of China, and on its receipt much discussion took place at the Chinese court—a wheeled conveyance never having been seen there before—as to which part should be the seat of honour. The Emperor, after mature deliberation, chose the hammer-cloth for his seat, as being the place, he said, nearest to the moon—there could be no doubt about it. The driver, therefore, was

put inside, and the reins were passed through the window!



EXPEDITIOUS TRAVELLING

FROM

LONDON TO GLASGOW AND PORTPATRICK,

IN FOUR DAYS,

BY WAY OF CARLISLE AND DUMFRIES.

A NEW POST COACH sets out from the 'CROSS KEYS,' WOOD STREET, LONDON, *every evening* (Saturday excepted), and arrives at BECK'S COFFEE HOUSE, CARLISLE, in three days; also sets out from BECK'S COFFEE HOUSE, CARLISLE, *on the same evening*, and arrives in three days at the 'CROSS KEYS,' LONDON. To accommodate passengers travelling northward and to Ireland A NEW POST COACH, which connects with the above, sets out from 'KING'S ARMS HOTEL,' CARLISLE, *every Tuesday and Thursday morning* at six o'clock for DUMFRIES; upon arrival of which at the 'GEORGE INN,' a DILIGENCE sets out for GLASGOW and another for PORTPATRICK. Also a DILIGENCE sets out from MR. BUCHANAN'S, the 'SARACEN'S HEAD,' GLASGOW, and another from MR. CAMPBELL'S, PORTPATRICK, *every Tuesday and Thursday morning* at four o'clock, to join the said DUMFRIES AND CARLISLE POST COACH, in which seats will be reserved for those travelling southward.

Each inside passenger from Carlisle to Glasgow or Portpatrick to pay £1 16s. 6d., and to be allowed ten pounds weight of luggage; all above to pay 2d. per lb. Children on the lap to pay half-price. Insides from Carlisle to Dumfries to pay 11s. 8d.; outsides, 6s. 8d. Small parcels from Carlisle to Portpatrick or Glasgow to pay 1s. 6d. each; all upwards of nine pounds to pay 2d. per pound. Passengers taken up on the road to pay 4d. per mile in both the Coach and Diligence; and for outsides on the Coach 2½d. per mile. Insides from London to Glasgow, £3 6s. Ditto from Carlisle to Glasgow or Portpatrick, £1 16s. 6d. Total: London to Glasgow or Portpatrick, £5 2s. 6d.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN PALMER AND THE MAIL COACH SYSTEM.

ONE of the most memorable events to be recorded in the Annals of the Road is the introduction of the mail coach system, for which the country was indebted to the late John Palmer, M.P. for Bath. It superseded Mr. Allen's system of post-boys, whose travelling rate was by contract five miles an hour. The mails used to be generally entrusted, says Mr. Palmer, to some idle boy without character, who was mounted on a worn-out hack, and who so far from being able to defend himself or to escape from a robber, was more likely to be in league with him.

Mr. Palmer was aware that sometimes tradesmen sent letters by the stage coach on account of the frequent robberies of the letters sent by the post-boys. 'Why, therefore,' said he, 'should not the stage coach, well protected by armed guards, under certain conditions to be specified, carry the mail bags?' This substitution of a string of mail coaches for the 'worn-out hacks' was the leading feature of his plan. His proposals also included the timing of the mails at each successive stage, so that they might all as far as possible be delivered

simultaneously. Again, he proposed that, instead of leaving London at all hours of the night, all the coaches for the different roads should start from the General Post Office at the same time. Thus was established a practice which long afforded to the stranger in London one of the first of City sights.

Mr. Palmer's mail coaches were not put on the road without great opposition and many objections on the part of the gentlemen of the Post Office. Notwithstanding his stipulation that mail guards should accompany them well armed, 'Still,' said the opposition, 'there are no means of effectually preventing robbery, as the strongest cart or coach that could be made, lined and bound with iron, might easily be broken into by determined robbers.'

The first mail coach on Palmer's system began running on August 8, 1784. The following order authorising this trial of the mail coach plan was issued on July 24 of that year: 'His Majesty's Postmasters-General, being inclined to make an experiment for the more expeditious conveyance of mails of letters by stage coaches, machines, &c., have been pleased to order that a trial shall be made upon the road between London and Bristol, to commence at each place on Monday the 2nd August next.' It did not, however, begin until the 8th. One coach left London at eight in the morning, reaching Bristol about eleven the same night. The distance between London and Bath was accomplished in fourteen hours. The other coach was started from Bristol at four in the afternoon on the same day, reach-

ing London in sixteen hours. The same day Mr. Palmer was installed at the Post Office under the title of Controller General. Coaches were applied for without loss of time by the municipal authorities of many of our largest towns, Liverpool being the first among them to petition. In most cases they appear to have been granted at once. They were started at the rate of six miles an hour, but this official rate of speed was subsequently increased to eight, to nine, and at length to ten miles an hour.

Soon after the introduction of the mail coaches, public appreciation of the benefits derived from them and of the great importance of the change was marked by the production of a copper medal, called the 'mail coach half-penny.' On one side it bore a representation of the coach and its team of horses at full speed, with the legend — 'To trade expedition and to property protection'; and on the reverse side a dedication as follows:— 'To J. Palmer, Esq. This is inscribed as a token of gratitude for benefits received from the establishment of mail coaches.'

The mails under the new system travelled with great security. For many years after their introduction, not a single attempt was made in England to rob them. In Ireland, however, the new system did not conduce to the greater security of the mails. The first coach was introduced in that country in 1790, and was placed on the Cork and Belfast road; and was soon followed by others on the main lines of road. Though occasionally accompanied by as many as four armed guards the mail coaches

in Ireland were robbed as frequently as the less aspiring post-boys.

The eminent services rendered by Mr. Macadam and his three sons in perfecting the roads contributed greatly to the successful working of the mail coach system. The Postmaster-General, the Secretary of the Post-Office, and the Superintendent of Mail Coaches, testified 'to the direct advantage and great benefit,' that the post-office work received from the good roads which were the result of their united labours.¹ Such a thing as an unmacadamised road is rarely seen now. The inventor has been playfully designated the 'Colossus of Rhodes'! Among the great and obvious advantages for which the country is indebted to Macadam, are, acceleration in the speed of coaches, and the possibility of their keeping TIME.

Early in the present century it was deemed desirable that all the mail coaches should be both built and furnished on one plan. Hence the 'patent coaches' as they were then called. For many years, the contract for building and repairing a sufficient number of them was given to Mr. John Vidler, who had suggested many improvements in their construction. Although the post-office authorities arranged for the building of the coaches, the mail contractors were required to pay for them; the revenue bearing only the charges of cleaning, oiling, and greasing them, which amounted to about 2,200*l.* a year. The official control of the coaches, mail-guards, &c., was

¹ See 'Remarks on the Present System of Road-making,' by John Loudon Macadam (London, 1824).

vested in the Superintendent of Mail Coaches, whose head-quarters were at the General Post Office.

In recognition of Mr. Palmer's exertions to improve the postal communication throughout Great Britain by means of his mail coach system, he was presented with a magnificent silver cup by the Chamber of Commerce and the manufacturers of Glasgow.¹

¹ This cup was presented in the summer of 1875 to the mayor and corporation of Bath by Mr. Palmer's granddaughter, in memory of her grandfather, who represented Bath in Parliament for many years, and was also chief magistrate and a native of the city.

CHAPTER VII.

REGULATIONS.

SOME notice of the details of the working of the new system, of the position, duties and pay of the guards and coachmen, of the furnishing of the coaches, rules of the road, &c., will be interesting to my readers. To these matters I address myself in this chapter.

The guards of the mails received only 10s. a week from Government ; but their perquisites sometimes mounted up to 3*l.* or 4*l.* a week when they were at work, and 12*s.* 6*d.* when not at work. Bankers entrusted thousands of pounds to their care ; and they often had the charge of plate-chests, jewellery, &c. For these responsibilities they were highly paid. They were armed with a blunderbuss¹ and a pair of pistols, which were placed in a kind of sword case fixed at the back of the coach in

¹ This was a short gun, having a brass barrel, bell-shaped towards the muzzle. It did not carry very true, as will appear from the following story, told me by Nevill, the old Carlisle mail guard, now employed in the General Post Office : ' Going over Salisbury Plain one severe winter's day, the snow lying deep, I saw some grouse near the road tamed by the weather. I took my blunderbuss, got down, and had a shot at them. They were about forty yards off ; but though I pride myself on being a good shot generally, I could not with my piece—loaded as it was with swan shot—get a true line, as the shot hit the ground 100 yards off, flying all over the place.'

front of their seat. They obtained their appointments on the recommendation of an M.P. They were required to bear a high character, to bring a certificate of health from a doctor, and before getting to work, had to be in the mail coach factory, that they might learn how to repair on a journey, how to rig on a temporary tire, to make up a broken pole, &c.¹ The coachman was under the orders of the guard; and the latter was furnished with a time-piece² by government, and wore the royal livery. Guards were bound to report on the state of the roads, and in case of any neglect the commissioners were summoned by them before the magistrates.

Should a toll-gate happen to be closed at the time of the passing of the mail, on the evidence of the guard, the keeper would be fined 40s. On the roof of the coach behind, exactly in front of the guard's seat, rested the guard's tool box, which contained—

Three pole bars, one twenty inches long, and two fourteen inches long.

At the bottom of the box,

Bolts and nuts for ditto,

Screw-wrench.

Two gimlets or nail passers, one large, called a spike passer, and one small.

Spring shackles and their bolts.

¹ See Instructions for the Mail Guards, Appendix B.

² This time-piece was fixed in a flat, square brass case. It was set, and the case locked, in London, and the guard wore it in a pouch suspended from his shoulder. It is related of one well-known waggoner, Mr. Ackers, that he was a martinet in time-keeping, and regularly carried a watch screwed into the butt end of his whip.

Axle-bolts.

Felloe clips.

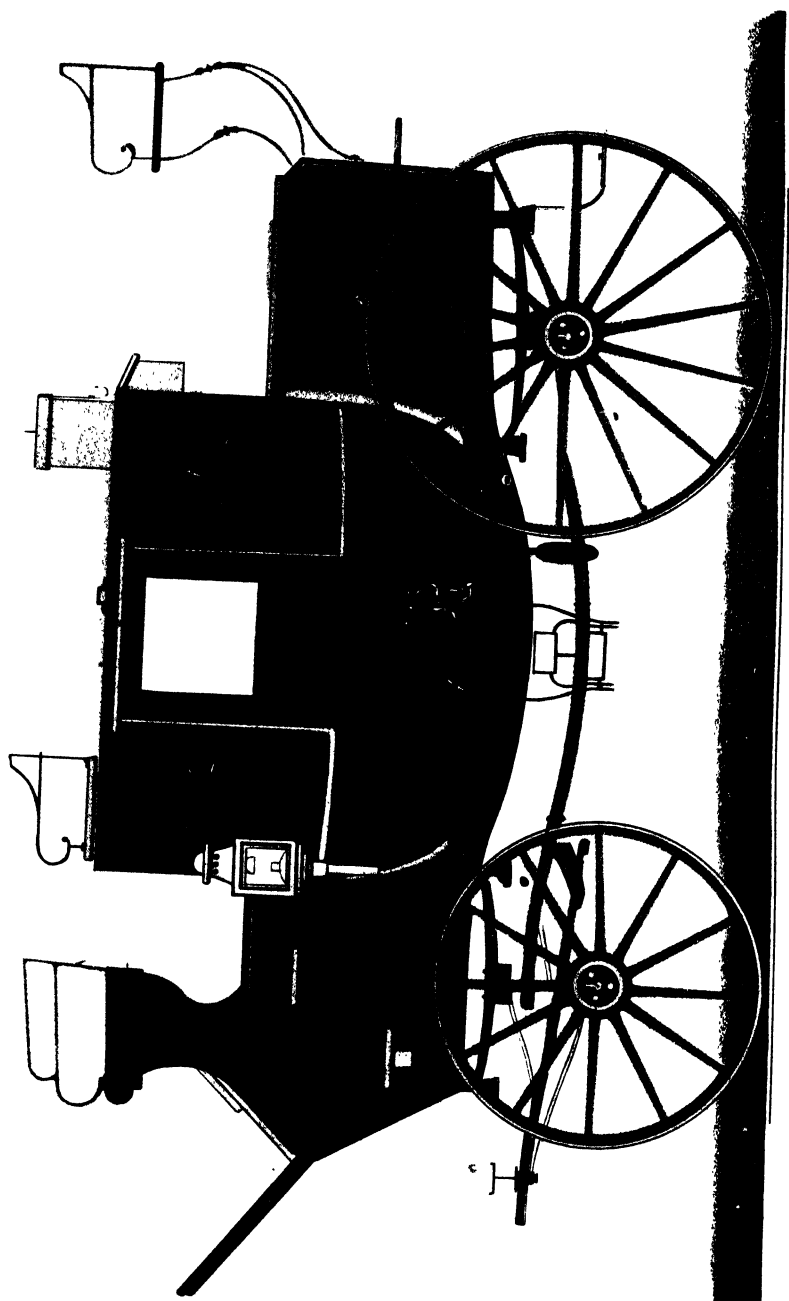
Two small spoke ditto.

One saw, the length of the box, and fastened to the lid.

On the front of this box were hooks to hang the mail bags on, 'bye' bags, as they were called, that were to be dropped on the road. These bags were of leather, bearing the place of their destination engraved on brass plates. Latterly, when the mails were allowed to carry three passengers on the seat behind the coachman, besides one on the box and three in front of the guard,¹ it became necessary to do away with the tool box a'top, and the tools had to be carried elsewhere. The blunderbuss case also had to be placed as a footboard, on the top of the mail box (called in stage coaches the hind boot). This mail box opened at the top, and at the back, and the lock of the box was thus at the feet of the guard. In case this lock was ever missing from its place, the dismissal of the guard was certain. A light was carried by the guard to enable him to sort the mail bags, separating 'bye' from 'forward.' One guard that I know carried his light under his seat, so that on opening his mail box he could see what he was at. Some of the mails carried two lamps on either side. The second lamp was sometimes carried at the side of the box-seat panels, but more frequently through the lower step irons of the boot. The round-faced Argand reflecting lamp,² with a

¹ The Yarmouth mail carried eight outside, as it was a bad road for the mails.

² Now so generally in use with the three pipe-light wicks.



round wick, was first brought out by the guard of the Bath mail, Macintyre, now (1875) engaged on the Brighton and London stage-coach. The lamp previously in general use had three pipe-like wicks, which were square-fronted.

One thing to remember is, that when in a fog, your lamps, however good, are useless to you ; for so long as your light is ahead, you will not even see your wheelers' terrets ; turn your lamp sideways, this will show you that you are in your road. In case of a fog the mails were always accompanied through London by men with torches. All the mails but two were night mails ; and the two day mails, of which Brighton was one, were pair-horse coaches.

' Did you ever hear tell of J——n B——l, sir ?' said a guard to me one day. I replied that I *had* heard of J——n B——l, but never met him in the flesh. All Englishmen and Frenchmen too, for the matter of that, knew *of* J——n B——l ! ' Well,' said my friend, ' he was a mail guard as I was, and a pretty mess he once made of his mails. Put on the Stroud mail one day, he got his orders to take care of them, and not to give them up to anyone. Blest if he didn't go and take the whole lot, including all he picked up on the road, to Stroud and never exchanged a single bag ! When he arrived at his destination *he* did get a blowing up for not dropping the bags at the proper places ; but all he said was, " I was told not to give up a single bag, and to take every care that no one took them from me, and I have done so." Well, he repeated the game on his up journey, never ex-

changing a single bag, and the end of it was that he got the sack! This was not all though ; for using his interest, he was actually appointed, very shortly afterwards an inspector of mail guards. Thus this out-and-out J——n B——l, who was not thought fit to be a mail guard, was made to look after other mail guards.'

The leather mail bags, since changed for canvas bags, date from 1603. They were 'well lined with baize or cotton so as not to injure the letters.'

It may not be generally known that the Queen is the only person who can have a mail bag opened after it has once been closed, the mails being as they are styled, 'Her Majesty's mails.'

So long as the mails were carried by post-boys, it rested with the different post-masters to furnish these post-boys or *couriers* with 'horns to sound and blow, as oft as the post meets company, or at least four times in every mile.' Thus arose a custom which, under modified arrangements, was strictly observed on mail coaches. The order to the guards of mails was that they were to blow their horns 250 yards before they came to a gate ; and the penalty for infringement of this order was 40s. The coach-horn, 'the three feet of tin,' was placed in a loop on the offside of the coach.

In 1836 there were fifty four-horse mails in England, thirty in Ireland, and ten in Scotland. In England there were besides forty-nine two-horse mails. In the last year of mail coaches, the number which left London every night punctually at eight o'clock was twenty-seven ; and

these travelled in the aggregate about 5,500 miles before they reached their several destinations.

The mail coaches were all miled at a usual charge of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ a mile, and were horsed by contract.

The weight of these mails should be 18 cwt. Their fore wheels were 3 ft. 4 in., and their hind wheels 4 ft. 8 in. in diameter.¹

All carriages carrying mails or expresses were exempted by Act of Parliament from paying any tolls; and should any demand be made on any such mail coach by any collector of tolls, or should any toll-keeper obstruct or delay the mail at his turnpike gate, or bar or gate of a walled town, he was to forfeit five pounds for every such offence. The punishment for stopping a mail with intent to rob was transportation for life.

Should the guard of the mail allow anyone to ride in the place appointed for himself, or should he be guilty of any misconduct on a mail coach, or not use his diligence to keep the time, according to the regulations of the Post Office he would be fined twenty pounds on conviction.

The carriage of letters by any but mail coaches or carriages was prohibited.

¹ A loaded coach (stage) never exceeds three tons. The average weight of twelve passengers and their luggage would be one ton.

CHAPTER VIII.

FURTHER REGULATIONS. DE QUINCY ON COACHING.

THE dignity of the General Post Office at St. Martin's-le-Grand is carefully guarded by various provisions. There no hackney carriage may stand or ply for hire. No hawker, newsvendor, or idle or disorderly person may stop or loiter on the flagway or pavement; if they do so, they forfeit for every such offence five pounds.

In 1844, the proprietor of a coach agreed to pay 200*l.* a-year to the Post Office for the privilege of carrying the mails from Lancaster to Carlisle twice a day, rather than be obliged to 'take off his bars.' In case heavy mails were expected, the General Post Office would secure the two seats behind the box seat, and the guard would make use of the room for his bags. More than six trunks or carpet bags no guard was *allowed* to take on the roof. This reminds me of a story told me by Mr. Nevill above-mentioned. Our friend J——n B——l, giving his instructions to a young guard going down to Bristol on the mail, said 'You'll only take portmanteaus, *i.e.* those things covered with leather or hair.' On his return journey Mr. J——n B——l being there to see (then Inspector of Mail Guards he was), what was seen but a big black dog a'top!

Mr. B——I enquired what he could be at to bring a dog on the top of the mail against his order, and right through London too, and up to the very Post Office doors ; and he added, ‘Suspend you for a week, sir.’ The guard replied, ‘You told me, sir, I was only to take anything covered with leather or *hair*, and this ere’s covered with hair.’ He was let off his punishment.

There was no duty imposed on mail coachmen or guards as there was on the drivers and guards of the stage coaches. On these the duty is 1*l.* 5*s.* per annum. There is a stage coach duty of 1*d.* a mile for four persons, 4*d.* a mile for twenty-one persons.

‘It was the mail coach,’ says De Quincy, ‘that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo.’¹ Dressed in laurels and flowers, oak leaves and ribbons, these coaches took down into the country the first news of any of the numerous victories achieved by English valour on the Continent ; the laurels, the emblem of victory, told the well-known tale throughout the whole course. The great disadvantages of not living near a mail coach road must have been felt at *some* time at a certain little village in Lancashire, which we are told the news of the battle of Waterloo never reached until near the first anniversary of that memorable fight, when the church bells rang out rejoicing peals. ‘The grandest chapter in our experience,’ says one who was a systematic coach traveller between

¹ ‘Selections, Grave and Gay.’

1805 and 1815 (a memorable period for the English arms) 'was on those occasions when we went down from London with the news of victory.'

Daily each part of every coach was very critically inspected by a regular inspector; every morning they were thoroughly cleaned; every morning the horses were groomed up to a degree of perfection not usually attained; and altogether the sight was one which no one seeing could ever forget. Thus, in De Quincy's words: 'The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriage and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity, but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses, were what first fixed the attention.'¹

Before 1834, in England only three passengers were allowed by Act of Parliament outside the mails: one on the box seat, and two on the roof immediately behind the box. None were allowed near the guard behind; this was by way of precaution against robbers. The load on the roof was also regulated by Act of Parliament. Beyond the Scottish Border, however, four passengers were allowed outside, one on the box seat, and three immediately behind it. The guard's dress was, of right, the Royal livery; the coachman would obtain the same honorary distinction after long service. The colour of the mails was crimson (the royal colour); the under carriage, box seat, and footboard were painted red; they bore on their door panels the royal arms only.

¹ 'Selections, Grave and Gay.'

On the four upper panels were the orders of : off side, fore, the Bath, hind, St. Patrick ; near side, fore, Thistle, hind, Garter. Before the year 1829, from 8 P.M. to twenty minutes later, the mails paraded not in St. Martin's-le-Grand,¹ but in Lombard Street, then the site of the General Post Office, and they filled the street double file. The coaches were summoned up to the Post Office by their names,—Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, and Aberdeen. The thunder of the lid locked down upon the mails was the signal for each one to depart.

¹ The present building in St. Martin's-le-Grand was opened on September 25, 1829.

CHAPTER IX.

PROCESSION OF MAILS ON THE KING'S BIRTHDAY.

THE great day of the year for the mails was the King's birthday, when a goodly procession of four-in-hands started from the great coach manufactory of Mr. John Vidler, in the neighbourhood of Millbank, and wended its way to St. Martin's-le-Grand. Splendid in fresh paint and varnish, gold lettering and royal arms, they were the perfection of neatness and practical utility in build, horsed to perfection, and *leathered* to match. They were driven by coachmen who, as well as the guards behind, were arrayed in spic-and-span new scarlet and gold. No delicate bouquets, but mighty nosegays of the size of a cabbage adorned the breasts of these portly mail coachmen and guards, while bunches of cabbage roses decorated the heads of the proud steeds. In the cramped interior of the vehicles were closely packed buxom dames and blooming lasses, the wives, daughters, or sweethearts of the coachmen or guards, the fair passengers arrayed in coal-scuttle bonnets and in canary-coloured or scarlet silks. On this great occasion the guard was allowed two seats and the coachman two, no one allowed on the roof. But the great feature

after all was that stirring note so clearly blown and well drawn out, and every now and again sounded by the guards, and alternated with such airs as 'The days when we went gipsying,' capittally played upon a key bugle. Should a mail come late, the tune from a passing one would be 'Oh dear! what can the matter be?' This key bugle was no part of the mail equipment, but was, nevertheless, frequently used.

Heading the procession was the oldest established mail, which would be the Bristol. On the King's birthday, 1834, there were twenty-seven coaches in the procession. They all wore hammer-cloths, and both guard and coachman were in new red liveries, the latter being furnished by the mail contractor. They wore beaver hats with gold lace and cockades. Such a thing as a low billycock hat was not to be seen on any coach, or anywhere. Sherman's mails were drawn by black horses, and on these occasions their harness was of red morocco.

The coaches were new each year. In these days brass mountings were rarely known, plated or silver only were in use. On the starting of the procession the bells of the neighbouring churches rang out merrily, continuing their rejoicing peals till it arrived at the General Post Office. Many country squires, who were always anxious that their best horses should have a few turns in the mail coaches in travelling, sent up their horses to figure in the procession.

From Millbank the procession passed by St. James's Palace, at the windows of which, above the porch, stood King William and his Queen. The Duke of Richmond

(then Postmaster-General) and the Duke of Wellington stood there also. Each coach as it passed saluted the King, the coachman and guard standing up and taking off their hats. The appearance of the smart coaches emblazoned with the royal arms, orders, &c., coachman and guard got up to every advantage, with their nosegays stuck in their brand-new scarlet liveries, was at this point strikingly grand. The Inspectors of mail coaches rode in front of the procession on horseback.

CHAPTER X.

USE OF THE KEY-BUGLE.

THE fact of the occasional use of the key-bugle on mail coaches has been questioned, and curiously conflicting evidence on the subject was given in a series of controversial letters which appeared in 'The Field' in the summer of 1873. In the first of these letters, 'Ex-Mail-Coachman,' then in his eighty-first year, positively asserts that 'no bugle was allowed on the mails; the only instrument used was the long, straight horn, blown by the guard only when occasion required it.' In the next letter, signed 'E. L. L.' regret is expressed 'at the gradual supplanting of the fine old key-bugle by the cornopean. The old order changeth,' he says, 'yielding place to new in most things, and in not a few I think we must confess "the old is better."' E. L. L. remembered first hearing the key-bugle in his boyhood, 'when travelling up to Eton from the lower part of Devonshire three times in each year,' and he states that there were then many good performers on the road, and that among them Jack Goodwin was his especial favourite. The use of the key-bugle is positively asserted in an interesting letter signed 'John Page, Manchester.' His statement is as follows :—

‘Sir,—I am old enough to remember the cheery sounds of the key-bugle as played upon some of our crack coaches of forty years ago, and, like “Deadfall,” much regret that those sounds have died away. How Prettyman, guard of one of the Manchester coaches, used to wake the echoes in some of the sleepy agricultural villages we passed through in those days! Brandt, also, on the Leicester “Union,” was an accomplished player, and could bring many to the windows and doors of their houses by the sweet music of his bugle. Brandt was also a scholar, and as great a favourite with gentlemen going down to the head-quarters of the hunt as he was with the pretty lasses of Dunstable. There was also a fine bugler on one of the Birmingham coaches, the “Tally-ho,” I think, and another on a Nottingham coach, which, if my memory is not at fault, was called the “Highflyer.” The Brighton coaches also had some good players in the days of Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Jones, and Sir Vincent Cotton. I think it probable that an “Ex-Mail-Coachman” may be correct in stating that bugles were not allowed on mail coaches, and L. R. P. may be right also in saying that he has heard the bugle played on the Holyhead mail. I have seen hundreds of mails depart from St. Martin’s-le-Grand when old Sherman kept the “Bull and Mouth,” with its great coach yard and wonderful stables, but I cannot call to mind any instrument being played upon them except the straight mail horn. Yet I knew one guard who had a bugle snugly stowed away, and brought out to the delight of the people who lived clear away from the smoke. One of

the guards alluded to could imitate the voices of different animals, and I have seen the large "Spanish Jack," then in the possession of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn, gallop after the coach to find he had been made an ass of, the lad on his back going to post grinning from ear to ear, and the whole thing affording much fun to the genus Joskin as well as the passengers. I could considerably extend these reminiscences—to me the theme is a genial one—but I must pull up. There have been changes since those days. How many of the smart whips, then in their prime, have taken the box for the last time on their down journey!

‘And the grass grows as green on the graves of most of these buglers as it does in front of some of the old wayside and now deserted hostelries they knew so well.

‘JOHN PAGE.

‘Manchester.’

‘J. S.,’ another correspondent, remembered hearing the key-bugle played by the guard on the mail coach between Portpatrick and Ayr, and also on the mail between Limerick and Tralee. ‘L. R. P.’ puts on record his boyish recollections of a guard on the royal mail from Holyhead to London playing on a key-bugle when passing his father’s house on the outskirts of Chester. He especially calls to mind that on Sunday evening the guard did honour to the day by ‘treating us to the “Old Hundredth,” and well he played it too.’ He adds the testimony of his mother, eighty years of age, and in full possession of her faculties, who remembered

quite well that when she lived at Kegworth, in Leicestershire, 'the guard of the mail used to enliven the village by playing airs as the mail passed through.' This letter called forth a second from 'Ex-Mail-Coachman,' in which he disavows any wish to doubt the statement of L. R. P. as to having heard the bugle played by the guard of the Holyhead Mail, but he adheres to his former assertion that 'the bugle was no part of the mail. The tin horn,' he says, 'was there, whether for the purpose of raising up the old pikeman in the dead of night to have his gate open, to warn the next change, or to let the market gardener who was fast asleep on the shafts of his cart know that the whole of the road was not his perquisite, and also to inform him that Her Majesty's mail, half an hour late, and going at twelve miles an hour, was close behind him. Let L. R. P. look at the mail pictures painted by Henderson, so correct in every detail, from the check rein on the raking leader to the drab overalls of the guard, and tell me if he can find the slightest trace of a bugle.' It is then pointed out by the writer of the original communication to 'The Field,' which gave rise to the correspondence, that he spoke of the use of key-bugles *on a special occasion*, namely that of the procession of mail coaches from Millbank, Westminster, to the General Post Office. He adds that he remembers seeing when a boy, in the shop of a musical instrument maker in Westminster, on more than one occasion, a lot of key-bugles laid out ready for the use of the mail guards on the occurrence of the annual procession. He admits 'that the mail regulations limited the guards to the post-

horn only,' but very much doubts whether the rule was rigidly enforced. 'Deadfall' next takes part in the discussion, but only to indulge in an old man's pleasant dreams and glorify the far-off past. He goes into a rapture over the bugle. 'What memories does the mere mention of the bugle call up? I remember the time when Goodwin ("Jack Goodwin" he was always called) or either of the two Blights could stop the whole business of a market by playing in magnificent style some really good air just as the coach would be starting after a change. I fancy I hear Goodwin playing "Or che in cielo," from the opera of *Marino Faliero* while I am writing this letter! It is a solo which every cornet-player should get. I heard it on the bugle for the first and only time in 1845. What a pity that so fine an instrument should be supplanted! It's "round" tone has never yet been rivalled, and if ever I become a millionaire I will have a band of my own with the lead on six bugles. The *appearance* of a well-kept bugle was always so good. What could be handsomer than the black shining copper of the instrument itself, and the inch of polished brass round the bell, and its seven bright keys? But I'm recalling old scenes and old days which, by-the-bye, I have the temerity to compare in my own mind with the present days of "progress," and I do not give the preference to the latter. I have a key-bugle hanging up in my sanctum, and I also have a cornopean quietly reposing in its case under the bookshelves, but I cast admiring looks at the fine old bugle, and shades of Goodwin, the Blights, Mackintosh, and the leader in my

old regiment, *cum multis aliis*, flit across my "mind's eye" and I wish myself thirty years younger.'

'Jack Goodwin' brings up the rear of the controversialists, feeling himself highly honoured in having his name associated with three such splendid performers on the bugle as the Blights and Mackintosh, named in 'Deadfall's' letter. He gives us also a bit of his biography, and a pathetic bit it is too, stating that 'In consequence of a "tip" from off the Kingsbridge coach I had my spine injured, consequently unsuited for an active life, also a slight paralysis of the speech which does away with all bugling. Seven years past I accepted a situation with Mr. Ramsden, cigar merchant, to superintend his billiard room in Old Town Street, Plymouth, the oldest establishment in the three towns.'

From all these letters, and from what Macintyre, the guard of the London and Brighton coach, has told me, viz. that when he was the guard of the Brighton mail, and in the procession on May 24, 1834, he was requested by the Inspector-General of Mails to play on his key-bugle, we may take the fact as established that key-bugles were *permitted*. Macintyre further told me that key-bugles, the 'three feet of tin,' the angel (a shorter horn), and whatever musical instruments were used, were the property of the guard and provided by him. This would account for the circumstance of some mails having them and some not.

CHAPTER XI.

WORK AND WAGES OF GUARDS.—DRIVING CLUBS.

THE certificate of health which all mail guards were required to show before getting to work, was most necessary, for their work was hard indeed.¹ These guards were noted for their strength and endurance. At the end of a journey of 120 or 150 miles, a guard might be compelled, should the succeeding guard, owing perhaps to snow accident or illness, fail to meet him, to go on to the end of the next stage, frequently another 150 miles. During the winter the mail guards were furnished with a 'Snow Book,' in which they were to record when it was necessary to obtain leaders, chaises, or saddle horses, on account of the snow, and whence such assistance was had, &c. Of their pay (10s. a week when at work on a mail) they could save very little, were they ever so economical. There was the mail-coach porter to pay, who took charge of their tool-box, the seat cover, and box coat, cleaned and loaded their two horse-pistols and the blunderbuss (these were loaded afresh for each journey), and cleaned their long boots, which had tops to put on for London wear; and there was oil to buy for their hand

¹ See Appendix B.

lamp. All this alone cost each guard 5*s.* a-week. Still it was better to be at work on 10*s.* than to be a 'super-numerary' on 12*s.* 6*d.* a-week, having to attend the Post Office all day long in readiness to go off; for the guard generally expected 2*s.* a-piece from outside and 2*s.* 6*d.* from inside passengers, besides what he could get for extra luggage, &c. All fares under 3*s.* the guard and coachman were allowed to divide between them. Election time was good for them, for the 'last state of the poll' was always worth 5*s.*

The passenger rates on stages were generally from 2½*d.* to 3*d.* a mile for outsides, and for insides about 4*d.* to 5*d.* Mail charges were much higher, viz. from 4½*d.* to 5*d.* outside, and 8*d.* to 10*d.* inside.

The expense of horsing a ten-mile-an-hour mail was from 55*s.* to 3*l.* per double mile for twenty-eight days. Say if 3*l.* per double mile, the mail, to pay, must earn 390*l.* a year of thirteen lunar months.

It required eight horses in summer and nine in winter to horse a mail or stage ten miles of ground to do ten miles an hour.

In connection with these details of the services and remuneration of those employed on the road, we may refer to the various driving clubs, which from time to time have been founded by those interested in coaching affairs. Some have had for their object the gratification of the passion for the whip, others the raising of the standard of skill in the class of coachmen, amateur, professional, and others some benevolent purpose.

The B. D. C., or Benson Driving Club, which took

its name from Benson or Bensington, in Oxon, on the Worcester road, forty-six miles from London, was an aristocratic club for those who cherished a fondness for the road. It was established on February 28, 1807. Nimrod gives all information respecting it from its foundation, and remarks truly how much the road owes to the existence of such clubs as these.

To the members of this club belongs the credit of being the chief means of establishing the Benevolent Whip Club for the relief of coachmen in distress. And I am indebted to Colonel Charles Tyrwhitt—a dragsman who will be recognised as ‘Charley Tyrwhitt,’ who used frequently to drive the ‘Age,’ and the ‘Windsor Taglioni’—for the following details. ‘The old B. D. C. continued to exist for a short time after the death of Sir Henry Payton—the grandfather of the late Sir Algernon—I think until about 1853–4. The “Black Dog” at Bedfont, which no longer exists, used to be the place where the Club always dined,¹ and where they had their private cellar.’

The Four Horse Club (called erroneously the Whip Club and the Four-in-Hand Club) started into existence in May 1808. See the history of this club by Nimrod, from which it appears that it ceased to exist before 1826.

It was broken up in consequence of the death of many of the members, and the advanced age of several others.

A new driving club was formed under the auspices of

¹ After Benson was given up.

Lord Chesterfield on June 2, 1838, which was called the Richmond Driving Club (R. D. C.), it being determined to revive in its former glory and splendour this national institution which has served as an encouragement to the breeding of the finest cattle in the world. This club met always at Chesterfield House (Lord Chesterfield, the promoter, being the Hon. Sec.), and drove to the 'Castle,' at Richmond, where they dined.

'You may not know,' writes his grace the Duke of Beaufort, 'One member of the R. D. C. was celebrated for being "dangerous," and never could get a passenger. One night after dining at the 'Castle' at Richmond, a passenger of another coach by mistake climbed on to his box. He was so pleased that he started immediately. The passenger looked up, and seeing that it was Mr. A—— who had hold of the ribbons, never hesitated an instant, but jumped straight from the box into the middle of the road.' This club had but a short existence.

Captain Gronow in his 'Celebrities,' writing of these times, says,—'In the days of which I speak there were amateur coachmen, who drove with unflinching regularity, and in all weathers, the public stage-coaches, and delighted in the opportunity of assimilating themselves with professional Jehus. Some young men, heirs of large landed proprietors, mounted the box, handled the ribbons, and bowled along the high road. They touched their hats to their passengers; and some among them did not disdain even the tip of a shilling or half-a-crown, with which it was the custom to remunerate the coachman. Many persons liked travelling to Brighton in the "Age"

which was tooled along by Sir Vincent Cotton, whilst others preferred Charley Tyrwhitt. On the Holyhead and Oxford, and the Bath and Bristol roads, Lord Harborough, Lord Clonmell, Sir Thomas Mostyn, Sir Charles Bamfylde, Sir Felix Agar, Sir Henry Parnell, Sir Bellingham Graham, Mr. Clutterbuck, Sir John Ladd, and other members of the Four-in-Hand Club were seen either driving the coach or sitting cheek by jowl with the coachman, talking about horses or matters relating to "life upon the road." One of the members of the Four-in-Hand, Mr. Vickers, was so determined to be looked upon as a regular coachman, that he had his front teeth so filed that a division between them might enable him to expel his spittle in the true fashion of some of the most knowing stage coach drivers !'

April 1856 saw the formation of the present 'Four-in-Hand Driving Club' (F. H. D. C.), a proof of the undying love of coaching on the part of many distinguished leaders of fashion. To the late Mr. William Morritt (a dragsman whose roans and yellow coach will not easily be forgotten) is the starting of this club due. The following is a list of the original members of the club :—

The Duke of Beaufort, Marquis of Stafford, Earl Vane, Lord Edward Thynne, Lord Henry Thynne, Sir Watkin W. Wynn, W. Morritt, C. Leslie, Captain Baillie, R.H.G., W. Cooper, W. Craven (1st Life Guards), W. P. Thornhill, J. I. Jones, R.H.G. ; J. L. Baldwin and L. Agar Ellis, Secretaries.

By the rules of the F. H. D. C. no coach is permitted to pass another unless the latter be standing still. The

pace is not to exceed ten miles an hour. The order for starting is arranged by lot; Hyde Park is the starting point. The club is limited to thirty members, and should a member be absent from the club for a whole year, he ceases to be a member.

‘Recreation,’ says the great Mr. Locke,¹ ‘is not being idle; and he who thinks it is must forget the early rising, the hard riding, the heat, cold, and hunger, which sportsmen endure. The life of a sportsman is congenial to pleasure, for it is passed amidst those scenes of nature which excite the most generous emotions; and the character of a sportsman is generally liberal and benevolent, and if he reap no other benefit than health from his sports he is well paid. Whatever may be the object he has in view, he should pursue it *con amore*, or it is flat and insipid.’

Some such noble thoughts as these, coupled with the growing taste for the road, and the exclusiveness of the Four-in-Hand Club, probably occurred to those gentlemen who in 1870 became the promoters of a new driving club called the ‘Coaching Club,’ which started under the best auspices. Its first public appearance was most promising, for I saw twenty-two coaches drawn up in Hyde Park on that occasion. As was expected, it flourished.

¹ ‘Sports and Pastimes.’

CHAPTER XII.

DANGERS OF THE ROAD.

THAT the road was not a pleasure to all, and chiefly in consequence of the existence of galloping coaches and amateur coachmen, may be gathered from the following letter entitled 'The Road and its Dangers' which appeared in the 'Sporting Magazine' for October 1822. The 'Old Traveller' certainly has not a very high opinion of the road as a gentlemanly pastime; and his fears of a 'case' may not have been without foundation.

'I have long considered your entertaining miscellany as the only vehicle for all that is passing in the sporting world worthy of record; but you have lately quitted the field, and got where many before you have made a conspicuous figure, namely, *on the road*. Who your correspondent Nimrod is, I do not pretend to conjecture; but I dare say he is one of those gentlemen coachmen, who a few years ago, not much to the credit of the English nation, and with a kind of perverted ambition, figured away through our streets in processions, on their road to Salt-Hill, or some other place of resort, in their white hats, and upper benjamins, driving their four spanking horses, *in close imitation of their inferiors*. Mr. Nimrod, I hear

my friends observe, (who know more of this matter than myself) is, no doubt, a coachman, and I dare say, one who has paid dearly for his knowledge, though it must be admitted, he imparts it freely and agreeably, to those who may wish to obtain it. He tells us how we are to do that, in every department of his favourite science, if it may be so called. But, Mr. Editor, I wish you would have the goodness to request that he will inform us how we are to travel fifty miles by a coach without having our necks broken, or our limbs shattered and amputated ? It is really heartrending to hear of the dreadful accidents that befall His Majesty's subjects now on their travels through the country. In my younger days, when I was on the eve of setting out on a journey, my wife was in the habit of giving me her parting blessing, concluding with the words " God bless you, my dear, I hope you will not be robbed." But it is now changed to "God bless you, my dear, I hope you will not get your neck broke, and that you will bring all your legs safe home again." Now, Mr. Editor, this neck-breaking and leg-amputating is all because one daring rascal wishes to show that he is a better coachman than another daring rascal ; or because one proprietor on the road is determined not to be out-done by another proprietor on the road.

'Neither can I think, sir, that such writers as Mr. Nimrod mend the matter much. By a lively and technical description of these galloping coaches, he makes many a young man fancy himself a coachman, from which cause many an old man gets capsized and hurt. For

example : A friend of mine coming up to town a short time since, by one of these galloping coaches, was upset and much injured. On going to sympathise with him on his misfortune, he informed me that the accident was occasioned by the leaders taking one road and the wheelers another, so between them both, over they went. "My God!" said I, "what was the coachman about; was he asleep or drunk?" "Neither," replied my friend, "*he had nothing to do with it; a young Oxonian was driving.*" Now, Mr. Editor, it is not at all improbable but that this Oxonian had been reading your magazine the night before, instead of his classics, and went the next day to put his theory into practice, by which my friend, a very worthy man, the father of a large family, nearly lost his life.

'Whoever takes up a newspaper in these eventful times, it is even betting whether an accident by a coach, or a suicide, first meets his eye. Now really, as the month of November is fast approaching, when, from foggy weather and dark nights, both these calamities are likely to increase, I merely suggest the propriety of any unfortunate gentleman, resolved on self-destruction, trying to avoid the disgrace attached to it, by first taking a few journeys by some of these Dreadnought, Highflyer, or Tally-ho coaches; as in all probability he may meet with as instant death as if he had let off one of Joe Manton's pistols in his mouth, or severed his head from his body with one of Mr. Palmer's best razors.'

In the reign of King George III., a stage coach,

driven by one Williams,¹ and going over Hounslow Heath on the road between Reading and London, was stopped by a highwayman, who, riding up, demanded money of the passengers. A lady gave up her watch, a gent his purse ; and away goes the highwayman, followed, however, by Williams (the bold) on one of the leaders, who 'nailed' and brought him back to the coach, on which he was placed and taken to Staines. This occurred on a Tuesday ; the hearing before the magistrates took place on Wednesday ; or Thursday he was in Newgate ; on Friday he was tried and sentenced to be hung on Monday. Williams then got up a memorial, petitioning for a reprieve ; and on this being presented to His Majesty the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. The King was so pleased with Williams' daring, that he presented him with a key of Windsor Park gate, to be used by him and his descendants so long as they drove a coach from Reading to London. This royal authority allowed them to pass through the park instead of going by the turnpike road.

Winter had its severities in the days of the old mail-coach. The Bath coach entered Chippenham one March morning in 1812, near the beginning of the month, with two of its outside passengers dead, and a third dying. The three travellers were frozen to death. We learn the fact from a letter written to Sir George Jackson by his mother, within a few days of the occurrence.

¹ His great-grandson drove a stage coach called the 'Vivid' (one of Benjamin Worthy Horne's) from the Cross-keys, Wood Street, and Charing Cross to Exeter. Jack Goodwin, the well-known guard and player on the key-bugle, was guard to this coach.

In January 1814, the mail coach from Edinburgh had to be left behind, the bags being forwarded to Alnwick on horse-back, and eight horses were required to draw the 'Wellington' coach from York to Newcastle.

The ostler at the 'Bull Inn,' Dartford, on the Dover Road—which inn, by the way, is one of those old galleried houses so picturesque and at the same time so comfortable and homely—told me that he had frequently seen boys lifted frozen from off their saddles on getting into the yard. During the severe winter of 1863, I saw the Norwich and Cromer coach leave the inn at Norwich, drawn by eight horses—the late eccentric Mr. Wyndham used often to drive this coach. The pack-horse and the waggon, the stage coach and the mail, have all had to succumb to the rage of winter. The patience, diligence, and self-sacrifice of guards of mails were conspicuous in the fearful snow-storms in 1836. A mail coach having travelled in Scotland during a driving snow-storm as far as it could advance, the guard, as was the custom in such cases, took the bags with him on horse-back for nine miles farther. And then the horse sinking deeper at every step, was sent back to the coach, while the rider (I should like to know his name), essaying to carry the bags on foot, was found with them around his neck next morning quite dead. During the winter months, a snow shovel was always carried on the mail; it was strapped, handle downwards, at the back of the guard's seat.

The fearful snowstorm of December 1836, which lasted the best part of a week, has never been equalled in England before or since. For ten days or more

travelling was nearly at a standstill. 'Never before,' writes a correspondent of the 'Times' of that day, 'never before within recollection was the London mail stopped for a whole night at a few miles from London, and never before have we seen the intercourse between the southern shores of England and the Metropolis interrupted for two whole days.' The guards represented the night of Sunday, December 25, of that year as one of the severest they had ever experienced, and this was saying a great deal. Scarcely a single stage-coach left London either on the 26th or the 27th, and arrivals from the country were as rare. For the heavy fall of snow during Christmas night was not limited to the Metropolis, but extended generally over the whole kingdom. The roads leading to Portsmouth and Poole were the only ones that remained open throughout this storm. The depth of the drifts in the hollows of most roads was reported to be from twelve to twenty feet. Some passengers described the drifts as 'mountains high,' and some of the coachmen stated that the snow in places was higher than their heads as they sat on the box. The King was, at the time, at Brighton, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the despatches were transmitted between London and the Pavilion. The few guards and coachmen who were fortunate enough to reach London on the 28th stated that it was not so much the quantity of snow fallen which created the difficulty, as the strong wind, which drove all the snow off the high lands into the hollows. The Brighton mail, a pair-horse coach, left town on the night of the 25th with four horses. The

Edinburgh mail started with six horses, and the Holyhead and Halifax were drawn by four horses with postilions. The stables of the coach proprietors in and around London were completely exhausted of cattle, owing to the non-arrivals from the country. As it was doubtful whether any of the mails would start, the proprietors of the principal coach inns in London refused to book passengers. The guard of the Exeter mail (by Yeovil), which started from Exeter on the night of the 26th, stated that they were buried in snow at five different places, and had to be dug out! The town of St. Albans was completely full of mails and coaches which could neither be got up nor down the road. It was said that on the 27th there were fourteen mail coaches abandoned on the various roads. In all cases the bags were removed, and the horses extricated, the mail coach being then abandoned until the change of weather commenced. In open parts of the country all trace of the mail road was lost, and the coachman was obliged in several instances to travel by guess, or trust to the instinct of his horses.

The great exertions made by the guards and coachmen of the mails on all the roads throughout the country, and the unparalleled privations and fatigues which they underwent, called forth the following thanks of the Postmaster-General :—

‘ To the mail guards—to be delivered by the Postmasters—

‘ I have hourly proofs of the great exertions made by the guards to get the mails forwarded through the snow,

and almost wonders have been performed ; this is most gratifying to the Postmaster-General. I am assured their exertions will be continued, and I pray they may not be to the injury of the health of the men respectively. I direct their attention to the plan of the snow plough, which may be seen at the Post Office.¹ I request the coaches which may be about the country, out of course, may be sent to their proper destinations.

(Signed) 'GEORGE LOUIS,
'Surveyor and Superintendent.'

It was found that the best means of saving horses from falling was to fill the hoof in the interior of the shoe with soft soap. This soap not only prevents the accumulation of snow, but by its repulsive properties prevents the horse's foot from slipping. By the 28th the roads were, by constant labour, partially cleared, and the mail contractors were generally ready to book passengers again, but still with the stipulation that they should bring *no luggage*.

It was reported in London at noon on December 26, that the Manchester, Holyhead, Chester and Halifax mails had stuck fast in the snow drifts at Hockley-Hill near Dunstable. In the background of this picture is the Chester mail. An attempt had been made, by the

¹ This plough was of triangular form, and was made of planks, with braces crossed to hold them together. The nose, or point, of the plough was shod with iron, and had also a shackle, to which hung whippings or bars, by which the horses drew it. It was made from four to six feet deep, according to the depth of the snow. No bottom was needed ; but it was laden on the top with planks, laid across, to give sufficient weight to keep it down to the ground. It was a very efficient implement.



help of waggon horses, to draw it out of the snow, but the fore axle gave way, and the coach was left behind; the bags were forwarded by a post-horse. The Holyhead mail in the foreground, was awkwardly situated, for the horses were all but buried in attempting to pull the coach out of the drift. The coachman got down and almost disappeared in the drift upon which he alighted; but fortunately at this juncture a waggon with four horses came up, and by attaching them to the mail it was got out of the hollow in which it was sunk.

In 1825 was established the celebrated stage coach, the 'Shrewsbury Wonder,' which maintained its character for punctuality, safety, and speed for thirteen years. It was the first that attempted to perform so long a journey as 154 miles in one day; in fact, as well as in name, it was the *wonder* of the day. Starting at a quarter to five o'clock in the morning, it arrived in London at a quarter to ten that night, stopping twice for refreshments. On the completion of the railroad between Birmingham and London, the 'Wonder' ran from Shrewsbury to Birmingham whence it was conveyed to London on the railroad.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WHITE HORSE CELLAR, PICCADILLY. SHORT STAGES.

HERE is a good picture of Piccadilly, in the neighbourhood of the White Horse Cellar, in 1829, drawn by Pierce Egan, author of the clever and humorous book 'Life in London; or, the Adventures of Tom, "Jerry," and Logic':

'It is highly necessary for persons who are quitting London at the above rendezvous for stage coaches to be alert, for their attention is so much occupied by the surrounding objects, that the passengers have scarcely time to think of themselves.

'To the strange and timid female the bustle and noise of the scene is extremely annoying; the almost perpetual blowing of horns, the arrival and departure of numerous stage-coaches, the busy, impertinent, resolute cads, also on the look-out to procure passengers, persuading them nearly against their inclinations to mount "this," or "that 'ere coach," with which their interests are connected; men with newspapers, others with umbrellas, oranges, pencils, walking-sticks, &c., form a most extraordinary assemblage, and absorb the whole attention; indeed the ignorant are very liable to make mistakes, and in more instances than one, it has been discovered too late to rectify the

S

error. When many miles out of town they have had the mortification of learning they have gone by a *WRONG COACH.* What a blow the exceedingly fat gentleman must have experienced when, having given strict orders to his man to take him two seats, he found that one was booked outside and one in!

‘The mistakes and blunders which are sometimes committed by travellers generally arise from the want of proper attention on the part of the book-keepers and porters, who are generally very sparing in their information.’ A ludicrous occurrence, writes Jehu, once happened to a friend of mine who was extremely near-sighted. This gentleman was dining on the road, and on resuming his journey happened to get into a wrong coach and was carried about twenty miles out of his way before he discovered his mistake. As soon, however, as it was discovered, he observed to the coachman, that as his luggage which was travelling by the other coach was labelled, he supposed it would go safe; upon which *coachee* replied there was no doubt of it, and that if *he* had been labelled he would have gone safe also!’

It must be remembered that the period during which the short stages ran in and about London preceded the introduction of omnibuses. On this subject the following statement by an old hand may have some interest. ‘I ought to know,’ he says, ‘something about ’buses and ’busmen; for I have been on the journey ever since I was the height of your walking-stick. When I was a little chap I used to sleep among the parcels in the boot

of a Paddington and City stage-coach. That was long before the 'buses came up. There used to be stage-coaches on the main lines that are now worked by the 'buses. They were just like an old country stage-coach. They were mostly in fact, old stage-coaches, only they had but a pair of horses instead of four. There is an old pattern stage-coach on the stones to this day; it comes in from Brixton Hill, and you may see it crossing London Bridge any morning. The coaches used to carry six inside, and twelve outside, and the fare was sixpence between Paddington and the City. They had no conductors, the coachman managed everything along with his parcel boy. The parcel traffic, which used to be worth something, was a perquisite of the coachman, and he had a boy to manage it, whom he paid himself; eighteenpence a week was about the figure. The boy rode in the boot along with the parcels; and sometimes he was paid by a share of the parcel profits. The coaches were owned by private people—publicans, stable-keepers and the like. The largest owner was a Mrs. Nelson (the spirited Mrs. Nelson, perhaps the most spirited coach proprietor that ever put a horse to a coach), the landlady of the "Spread Eagle" in Gracechurch Street, whose family owned the "Favourite" 'buses till they were taken over by the Company. Their pace wasn't very lively; you see the roads were not so good as now, and the competition wasn't very keen. About four and a half miles an hour was the pace, and the coaches used to stop an hour at each end of the journeys. The great head-quarters for the Paddington stage-coaches

were at the "Yorkshire Stingo;" and almost all of the West-end coaches in these days, used to stop in St. Paul's Churchyard, instead of going down Cheapside to the Bank. They were well patronised, the old coaches, and several fine fortunes have been made out of them.'

CHAPTER XIV.

COACHING IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND.

FIFTY years ago, the state of coaching in remote country districts, and especially in the northern counties, presented in many respects a great contrast to its state near London. The progress of improvement had been much slower, and the country turn-outs were not so 'bang-up' as the London ones.

'The build of the coaches,' says Nimrod,¹ who, in 1827 took the York coach at Leeds, 'the manufacture of the harness, and the stamp and condition of the horses are greatly inferior in these northern counties; and as for the coachmen, I saw but four at all deserving that appellation. The man who drove us on the day I am speaking of reminded me more of a Welsh drover than anything else. He had neither gloves, boots, nor gaiters, although the day was cold, which at first excited my surprise; but when I found that he only drove one ten-mile stage, I ceased to wonder, as a glass of gin on leaving the town, one on the road, and towelling his wheel horses, kept his blood on the move for the short time he was at work. As I sat by the side of him he

¹ 'Yorkshire Tour.'

was kind enough to amuse me with some hair-breadth escapes he had experienced when on one of those galloping opposition coaches, which more than once went from Leeds to London, one hundred and ninety-six miles, in sixteen hours. But I soon lamented having introduced the subject. I accidentally told him he must be a proficient on the bench, or he would not have been put on so fast a coach; and this was near being our death-warrant. To give me a specimen of his art, he sprung his horses into a gallop, on some falling ground, and in a clumsy attempt to pull them up by the leg he got his reins clubbed, and I thought nothing could have saved us. I shammed sick and got into the coach. But the novelty of the scene did not end here. When we came to Tadcaster, only ten miles from York, the door of the coach was opened, and "Please to remember the coachman" tingled in the ears of the passengers. "What now," said I, "are you going no farther?" "No sir, but ah's (Yorkshire for 'I') goes back at night," was the Yorkshireman's answer. "Then you follow some trade here, of course?" continued I. "No, sir," said a bystander, "*he has got his horses to clean.*" "Oh, that's the way your Yorkshire coaching is done, is it?" said I to my communicative friend on the pavement. I then saw my fellow passengers pull out sixpence each and give it to John, who was not only satisfied, but thankful. "What am I to do?" said I to myself, "I never gave a coachman sixpence yet, and I shall not begin that game to-day." So I chucked him a *bob*, which brought his hat down to the box of the fore-wheel.

‘With a fresh team and a fresh *driver* (it will not do to use the word “*coachman*” upon all occasions), we proceeded to York fourteen miles farther. About half-way the coach stopped at a public-house in the old style; the coachman got down, the gin bottle was produced. Looking out of the window I espied my friend John, whom I thought we had left behind us at Tadcaster, hard at work with the wisp. “What,” said I, “are you here?” “Why yes,” answered John; “’tis market at York, and ah’s wants to buy a goose or two.” “Ah,” observed I, “I thought you were a little in the huckstering line.”’

CHAPTER XV.

PETER PRY'S LETTER.—COACHMEN.—YARDS.

IN recalling those old times it is interesting to form an acquaintance with the actors in them. Some reminiscences of them are to be found in the volumes of the 'Sporting Magazine' of forty or fifty years ago, which introduce us to the most celebrated coachmen of mails and stage-coaches. The first of these whom I shall present to my readers is one Cartwright, who drove the York Express coach from Buckden to Welwyn. He is thus described by a writer who signs himself Peter Pry:

'Mr. Cartwright drives the York Express coach from Buckden to Welwyn and back every day, about seventy miles, for one or two stages of which he provides horses. He has done this for many years, with scarcely any intermission. I consider him under fifty years of age, bony, without fat, healthy-looking, evidently the effect of abstemiousness; not too tall, but just the size to sit gracefully and powerfully, as well as to render his getting up and down easy. The moment he has got his seat and made his start, you are struck at once with the perfect mastership of his art: the hand just over his left

thigh, the arm without constraint, steady, and with a holding command that keeps his horses like clockwork, yet to a superficial observer quite with loose reins. So firm and compact is he, that you seldom observe any shifting; only, I may say, to take a shorter purchase for a run down hill, which he accomplishes with greater confidence and skill than any man I ever saw, untinctured with imprudence. His right hand and whip (now I want Nimrod) are beautifully in unison: the cross, if not in direct line with the box, over the near wheel, raised gracefully up, ready, as it were, to reward the near-side horse; the thong, after three twists (just enough suspended for the necessary purpose), which appear in his hand to have been placed by the maker, never to be altered or improved, and if the off-side horse becomes slack, to see the turn of his arm to reduce a twist, or to reverse it, if necessary, is exquisite, and after being placed under the rib, or upon the shoulder point, up comes the arm, and with it the thong returns to the elegant position upon the cross. I say elegant—the stick highly polished yew, rather light, not too taper, yet elastic, a thong in clean order, pliable,—with this man it really is elegance, the direction of the thong over the cross without effort, simply a turn of the wrist.¹

‘ This refinement in the management of the whip is not of many years’ birth. I remember when it was not known as a luxury in driving; even now it belongs only to a rare few to execute the accomplishment effectively

¹ The length of your whip should be 5 ft. 1½ ins. from the butt to holder, and 12 ft. 5 in. or 6 in. from the holder to the end of your point.

and with grace. Some men, aware of the facility it gives to punishment, will hold the cross over the off wheel perpendicularly, and twist away till the desideratum is obtained, and then the ears and haunches well scored are the result.

‘Cartwright’s perfections end not here—his manner of treating the leaders is equally fine. His teams are too good ever to require severity, therefore you cannot get to see a specimen of the different strokes, right and left. However, to see my friend use a back-handed draw over the leaders’ heads is worth riding many hours in a wet day for, which I did. Even this *esprit de l’homme* is rare, for his system is stillness, and to drive without using the whip. The tits are fair, not first-rate; but the steadiness and lightness of his hand, cool temper, perfect acquaintance with pace, and knowledge where the best play is to be made, render his task more than easy, quite a pleasure, and he performs his distance always to a minute, load or no load. He is no dandy, but is equipped most respectably and modestly, with good taste. He seems the idol of the road both with old and young; his manners on the box are respectable, communicative without impertinence, nor tarnished with cant slang (only fit for collegiates in teens, in rough coats and pearl buttons as large as the crown of the low hat with a long brim). He is acquainted with everybody and every occupation within his sphere, and is therefore an entertaining companion even to an ordinary traveller, but combining these with his perfect professional knowledge, embracing all niceties, he enchants an amateur, and through rain,

fog, frost, or any other agreeable antidote, not forgetting a sharp easterly, you keep the box without a moment's regret. His excellent qualities have gained their reward; he is well-to-do, lives regularly, with a happy family, envying neither lord nor peasant.

'I rode through a bad day from London to Grantham, taking my leave of the coach there, but cannot do so here without a just commendation—that it is by far the best conducted on the north road. One hundred and ten miles finished by half-past eight renders a man well inclined to the enjoyment of a quickly managed dinner at that exquisite inn, the "Saracen's Head," where you have a cleaner cloth, brighter plate, higher polished glass, brisker fire, with more prompt attention and civility, than at most other places, indeed as readily and effectively as if you had to pay 10s. to two first-turn boys.

'The ensuing morning at a quarter after eight, listen! listen! three lengthened blows of a horn, not bugle (I wish Nimrod would give me a better and more pleasing term than *blow* for this mail coach characteristic), announce the arrival of the Edinburgh mail, when out step night-capped passengers half asleep; however, fresh water and good spirits dispel the gloomy faces, and down go, for twenty minutes, hot rolls, boiled eggs and best Bohea.

'I slept here on purpose for the opportunity of having a ride on this celebrated mail—bribed for a box seat, though the morning was very severe. It was clear and dry, however, and a day or two of like character rendered the roads in the most perfect order. Not a puddle, not

a particle of soil even stirred or dimmed the polished fellies; no impediment, excepting now and then a few of Macadam's three-cornered diamonds; but even they give a pleasing variety to the deep round roll of a mail. I have not room to do more than offer a humble tribute of praise to this renovator of ways: he deserves both eulogy and reward.

'The same coachman from Stamford proceeded, his stage being to Doncaster, about seventy-five miles. This Mr. Leech, who has been many years receiving the keen air and healthy breezes in this distance every day, is too well known for me to say much about. He is not so highly finished a man as my former friend, but he is quietness itself. His horses are in the highest condition, well bred, and so much above their work as to require the strictest attention. He granted me the favour of a drive; and but from weak wrists arising from that potent enemy to all enjoyment, the gout, I should have received a high gratification. The pace, ten miles an hour, appears nothing to do—no hurry, no distress, no whipping. He has a team from Barnby Moor to Rosseter Bridge, ten miles, four bay blood mares entirely matched. They go every day, and have done so for five or six years, without an accident or a rest-day asked for. The harness, the condition, and the quickness of changing, all say they are Clark's.

'I cannot part with my friend Leech without advertising to a most singular and unique custom I witnessed on the road, which doubtless is peculiar to the natural feeling of true hospitality and kind-heartedness in the

Northern breasts. In the village of Sutton-on-Trent and its neighbourhood, the small farmers and cottagers once a year, with a week's continuance, prepare their homely offerings to the mail coachmen and guards, not forgetting the passengers. The time is watched with anxious care by the young girls of the families, or by the old people if left alone in the world. Upon a tray covered with a beautiful damask napkin are displayed plum cakes, tartlets, gingerbread, exquisite home-made bread and biscuits, ale, currant and gooseberry wines, cherry-brandy, and, by some, spirits. These in old-fashioned glass jugs embossed with figures have a most pleasing effect. As to the contents, they are superlative. Such ale! such currant wine! such cherry-brandy! Oh! The coach was compelled to stop, and was surrounded by half a dozen damsels, all enchanting young people, neatly clad, rather shy, but courteously importunate; at the close, not in ill-humour, however, at the passing jokes accompanying your thanks: eat and drink you must. I tasted all. How could I resist the winning manners of the rustics, with rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes? My poor stomach, not used to such luxuries and extraordinary at eleven o'clock in the morning, was, however, in fine agitation the remainder of the ride, fifty miles. Neither time nor entreaties can prevent their solicitations; they are issued to reward the men for trifling kindnesses occasionally granted. We lost ten minutes; they were soon recovered by one or two good spurts, indeed a gallop was an agreeable *finale*.

'It was my intention to have given the picture of

another prominent character I fell in with on my return, but I have gabbled away without thought to an extravagant length, therefore my obeisance ought to be made. But as my journey was a long one, and occasioned some occurrences amusing to myself, I shall not object to submit another offering, provided the manner and matter of this be considered acceptable.

‘My family are notorious for the love of curiosity and restlessness. Indeed, the fame of my brother Paul is spread over every clime. I possess neither his intellect nor activity; but I have a good share of his impudence. However, I cannot change either my nature or name; so must be your obedient humble servant,

‘PETER PRY.’

Of another well-known coachman, George Clarke, ‘Peter Pry’ says there is scarcely any district more trying to a coachman than this in which George Clarke works. He takes the ‘Umpire’ at Newport Pagnel, and meets the down coach at Whetstone, returning about nine o’clock, after thirty miles’ hard work. Mr. Okaver, ‘one of the best judges in England,’ speaking of Clarke, said to ‘Peter Pry,’ ‘He is the first coachman in England for bad horses, and therefore the most valuable of servants.’ ‘Peter Pry’ continues,—‘Having always weak horses to nurse, the ordeal has worn him down to a pattern of patience. With these and other great weights upon severe ground, he is steady, easy, very economical in thong and cord, very light-handed, and sometimes even playful. I observed him closely, and discovered from his

remarks, as well as from what I saw, that his great secret of keeping his nags in anything like condition, and preserving them when apparently worn out, is by putting them properly together, by constantly shifting the situations, by the use of check reins with remarkable judgment, by which means he brings the power to as near equality as possible, besides preventing the horrid evil of boring. Indeed they all went light and airy, and though at times his hold of necessity becomes powerful, yet, generally speaking, he takes his load without a severe strain upon his arms.' The idea of having new roads to run in a perfectly straight line, taking London for the centre, had at this time been talked of for many years, on the eastern side of the country, in the direct line between Edinburgh and London. A grand new road had been spoken of for some time; and in 1824 a good road was finished and opened out as far south as Morpeth. There is nothing new under the sun, and in this straight line notion we were but following that of the Romans. A continuation of the road from Morpeth to London being greatly needed, the Post Office authorities engaged Mr. Telford, the eminent engineer, to make a survey of it over the remaining distance. The survey lasted many years. A hundred miles of the new Great North Road, south of York, *were* laid out in a perfectly straight line when the works (which were to cost an enormous sum) were arrested by the introduction of railroads. Who knows but that some day railroads may be found too crooked! 'direct advantage' is what certainly is sought in everything.

I must not omit here the sketch of yet another coachman, Cracknell of 'Tantivy' fame, drawn by a writer who signs himself 'Whiz.'¹

'Almost any tidy whip can push along the Brighton "Age" or the "Taglioni" in the style of Sir Baronet or Charles Brackenbury; but I doubt whether they could keep the pace with the cripples we had the other night in the Bristol Mail, over the long hill at mail speed and under Post Office regulations. If I were to name one man above another who does fast work in the most finished style, and who possesses tact and perseverance almost more than any other coachman, it would be Cracknell, on the London side of "Tantivy"; and although not a most finished ribbon-holder, still he is a most wonderful time-keeper and nurser of weak stock. He seems to consider minutely the constitution and disposition of every horse he handles, and eases them wonderfully when in difficulty, and his head seems always at work for their indulgence. Driving is a science not easily obtained by amateurs; the science consists in apportioning the labour and shifting the load, so as to keep the stock above their work; and not as many amateurs suppose, in neatly taking off a fly on the leaders' ears.'

Of the 'Yards' at this time, Mr. Chaplin's was the largest, having 1,300 horses at work. He owned the 'Spread Eagle'² and 'Cross Keys,' Gracechurch Street, the 'Swan with two Necks,'² in Lad Lane, and the 'White Horse,' in Fetter Lane.

¹ 'Sporting Magazine,' 1837.

² These two inns were afterwards long held, first by Mrs. Nelson, and afterwards by Mrs. Ann Mountain.

Messrs. Hall and Sherman were the next largest coach proprietors ; they were the proprietors of the celebrated 'Bull and Mouth.'¹

'Bull and Mouth Yard.'

'Come, it is time we are alive and look out, for the yard is all in a bustle ; here are lots of coaches preparing for a start, so let us look around and see what is going forward. We sally forth into the yard where the confusion created by the arrival of one coach heavily laden, and the preparation of two for departure, afforded a scene for a quiet contemplatist which, however, it is not easy to describe.

"Coachman," said an antiquated lady just alighting, "I paid my fare."

"Yes ma'am, that's all fair," said coachy.

"Mind how you hand my dear little boy out of the coach ; poor little fellow, he is quite dizzy with riding."

"I thinks as how you had better have brought a man with you, for you want taking care of yourself," grumbled coachy, as he handed the young one out. "There he is, ma'am—stand upon your pins, my man."

¹ Now known as the 'Queen,' though the sign of the 'Bull and Mouth' is still over the old archway, which, having been partly filled in, now forms the front door entrance. Under the figure of the bull are these lines :

'Milo, the Cretonian,
An ox slew with his fist,
And ate it up at one meal,
Ye Gods, what glorious twist !'

This suggests a different notion of the origin of the sign from the usually-accepted one, which makes it refer to the taking of the town of Boulogne.



“Come, Charley—oh, coachy, you have got my box in your boot.”

“Aye, aye, ma’am, I know it; I wish my boot was in your box—here it is, ma’am.”

“Stand by,” said a Jack tar, “let’s have a little sea room and no squalls.”

“Coachy, what a rude fellow that is; he says I squalls.”

“Never mind him, ma’am, he is as rough as the element he belongs to—thankye, ma’am—that’s the time o’ day,” pocketing a half-crown which she had just given him. “Here, Bill, take this lady’s luggage out of the way.”

“Just going off, sir—do you go by me?”

“Yes, how many have you inside?”

“Only four, sir, and you two make up the number. All ready, Jem, bear up the leaders. Now, gentlemen, you brush in and I will brush on. Shut the door, Dick; all right—ya—hip.”

The following is a list of good coachmen at work in 1838 :—

‘The Baronet’ (Sir Vincent Cotton), driving the ‘Age,’ on the Brighton road.

Mr. Charles Jones.

Mr. John Willan, ‘Brighton Times.’

Holmes, Blenheim, Oxford.

Jerry Howse, ‘Tantivy,’ Birmingham.

Tom Mountain, ‘Salisbury,’ Birmingham to Oxford.

Cracknell (one of the first to dispense with cruppers and running reins), Birmingham.

Captain Warbuck, 'Alert,' Cheltenham to Birmingham.

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Wilcox's (two) | } coachmen out of Birmingham. |
| Kingsbury | |
| Stephen Howse | |
| Tolley | |

Jack Sprorson, who drove the 'York House' between London and Marlborough.

Cragnell, driving the 'Eclipse' out of Southampton.

Sydney Robinson, out of London.

The task of the professional coachman was no light one. 'The anxiety attendant upon driving a four-horse stage,' says Pierce Egan, 'keeping strange horses at times well together and to do their work, the duty to be performed whether in hot or cold, wet or dry, the safety of the passengers always in view either up or down the hills, the absolute necessity of KEEPING TIME (and there is the great secret to be learned by the would-be coachman), the different tempers to please inside and outside the coach, civility always required, and satisfaction to be given to the various proprietors. When all the above circumstances are taken into consideration, the liberal mind must be clearly satisfied that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.'

Within the last twenty-five years the stage coachmen throughout England are an improved race of men.

Altogether the waste butt sort of chap is entirely removed from the box; drinking at every inn quite ex-

ploded, and the driver in general so well toggged, his linen white as snow, and viewed not only as one of the best dressed, but frequently the best behaved, man upon the coach; full of anecdote, anxious to please all parties, cheerful and merry, frequently humming some well-known air; by which means a journey of fifty or sixty miles in our days is disposed of so quickly as to appear more like a matter of pleasure than the dull heavy routine connected with business and fatigue. And such a one was 'Bill-put-em-along.'

CHAPTER XVI.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S PORTRAIT OF A STAGE COACHMAN.

WASHINGTON IRVING, in his very graphic description of English life and character in the 'Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon,' depicts 'a stage coachman of quite the old school' to the life. Travelling in Yorkshire in December, the day preceding Christmas Day, he found the coach crowded inside and out with passengers, most of them on their way to spend the morrow with friends. 'The coach,' he says, 'was loaded also with hampers of game, and baskets and boxes of delicacies; and hares hung dangling their long ears about the coachman's box, presents from distant friends for the impending feast. I could not but notice the more than ordinary air of bustle and importance of the coachman, who wore his hat a little on one side, and had a long bunch of Christmas greens stuck in the button-hole of his coat. He is always a personage full of mighty care and business, but he is particularly so during this season, having so many commissions to execute in consequence of the great interchange of presents. And here, perhaps, it may not be unacceptable to my untravelled readers to have a sketch that may serve as a general representation of this very

numerous and important class of functionaries, who have a dress, a manner, a language, an air peculiar to themselves, and prevalent throughout the fraternity; so that wherever an English stage-coachman may be seen he cannot be mistaken for one of any other craft or mystery. He has commonly a broad full face, curiously mottled with red, as if the blood had been forced by hard feeding into every vessel of the skin; he is swelled into jolly dimensions by frequent potations of malt liquors, and his bulk is still further increased by a multiplicity of coats in which he is buried like a cauliflower, the upper one reaching to his heels. He wears a broad-brimmed low-crowned hat, a huge roll of coloured handkerchief about his neck, knowingly knotted and tucked in at the bosom, and has in summer time a large bouquet of flowers in his button-hole, the present most probably of some enamoured country lass. His waistcoat is commonly of some bright colour, striped, and his small clothes extend far below the knees to meet a pair of jockey boots, which reach about half-way up his legs.

‘All this costume is maintained with much precision—he has a pride in having his clothes of excellent materials; and notwithstanding the seeming grossness of his appearance, there is still discernible that neatness and propriety of person which is almost inherent in an Englishman. He enjoys great consequence and consideration along the road; has frequent conferences with the village housewives, who look upon him as a man of great trust and dependence; and he seems to have a good understanding with every bright-eyed country lass. The moment he

arrives where the horses are to be changed, he throws down the reins with something of an air, and abandons the cattle to the care of the hostler, his duty being merely to drive from one stage to another. When off the box his hands are thrust in the pockets of his great coat, and he rolls about the inn yard with an air of the most absolute lordliness. Here he is generally surrounded with an admiring throng of hostlers, stable-boys, shoe-blacks, and those nameless hangers-on, that infest inns and taverns, and run errands and do all kinds of odd jobs, for the privilege of fattening on the drippings of the kitchen and the leakage of the tap-room. These all look up to him as an oracle, treasure up his cant phrases, echo his opinions about horses and other topics of jockey lore, and, above all, endeavour to imitate his air and carriage. Every ragamuffin that has a coat to his back, thrusts his hands in the pockets, rolls in his gait, talks slang, and is an embryo coachey.'

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN DAY, A PATHETIC BALLAD.

THE following humorous sketch, from the facetious pen of Tom Hood, the celebrated punster, will form an amusing contrast to the preceding realistic portrait by Washington Irving:—

JOHN DAY, A PATHETIC BALLAD.

‘A day after the fair.’—*Old Proverb.*

John Day he was the biggest man
Of all the coachman kind,
With back too broad to be conceived
By any narrow mind.

The very horses knew his weight
When he was in the rear,
And wished his box, a Christmas box,
To come but once a year

Alas! against the shafts of love
What armour can avail?
Soon Cupid sent an arrow through
His scarlet coat of mail.

The barmaid of the ‘Crown’ he loved,
From whom he never ranged;
For though he changed his horses there,
His love he never changed.

He thought her fairest of all fares,
So fondly love prefers ;
And often among twelve outsides
Deemed no outside like hers.

One day as she was sitting down
Beside the porter pump,
He came and knelt with all his fat,
And made an offer plump.

Said she, my taste will never learn
To like so huge a man ;
So I must beg you will come here
As little as you can.

But still he stoutly urged his suit
With vows, and sighs, and tears ;
Yet could not pierce her heart, although
He drove the Dart for years.

In vain he vowed, in vain he sued,
The maid was cold and proud,
And sent him off to Coventry
While on the way to Stroud.

He fretted all the way to Stroud,
And thence all back to town ;
The course of love was never smooth,
So he went up and down.

At last her coldness made him pine
To merely bones and skin ;
But still he loved like one resolved
To love through thick and thin.

Oh Mary ! view my wasted back,
And see my dwindled calf ;
Though I have never had a wife,
I've lost my better half.

Alas ! in vain he still assailed,
Her heart withstood the dint ;
Although he carried sixteen stone
He could not move a flint.

Worn out at last, he made a vow
To break his being's link ;
For he was so reduced in size
At nothing he could shrink.

Now some will talk in water's praise,
And waste a deal of breath,
But John, though he drank nothing else
He drank himself to death.

The cruel maid that caused his love
Found out the fatal close ;
For looking in the butt, she saw
The butt end of his woes.

Some say his spirit haunts the 'Crown,'
But that is only talk ;
For after riding all his life
His ghost objects to walk.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ASCOT.

AMONG the reminiscences of bygone years, I must find room for a graphic and animated picture of Ascot on its race-days about half a century ago, drawn by the skilful hand of a writer who assumed the name of 'Patroclus,' and contributed to the pages of the 'Sporting Magazine.' It was in June 1827 that Patroclus drove down with a friend to Ascot races and saw with keen eyes what he has described.

The '*lathy chap* Stevy,' alluded to by 'Patroclus,' is the celebrated young cantab, Mr. Stevenson, who did so much when on the Brighton road (see my list of coaches and coachmen down this road), to elevate the science and heighten the tone of the thing, bringing Corinthian and coachman more on a level: This by reason of his fine taste, his scientific knowledge, and his accomplished style of driving, he was well able to do. His establishment (for he ran his own coach, the 'Coronet') was of the first order; no pains or expense were spared to collect the best of *quads* and to render the thing complete and suitable to all tastes. The 'Coronet' started daily from London and Brighton, and did its journey in six hours without

hurry or distress. This testimony is due to the memory of so eminent a sporting character.

‘Tuesday and Thursday,’ says Patroclus, ‘were by far the best attended; indeed the crowd was intense, like the heat; splendid, genteel, grotesque, many in masquerade, but all in good humour. It is no easy matter to give anyone an idea of the strange monstrosities and strange appearances, which keep you in constant agitation and surprise, upon a fully peopled race-course. My poor friend, unused to such a whirligig scene, was hissing hot with the burning sun and Babel varieties (indeed nothing but cooling drink from the ice-tub—another novelty—brought him to colour and quiet)—dandies of men, dandies of women, lords in white trousers and black whiskers, ladies with small faces and very large hats, Oxford scholars with tandoms and randoms, some on stage-coaches transmogrified into drags,¹ fifteen on the top, and six thin ones within; a two foot horn, an *ice-house*, two cases of champagne; sixteen of cigars; all neck-cloths² but white; all hats but black; small talk without oaths, and broad talk with great ones, cooled with ice and made red hot with brandy and smoke; all four-in-handers; all trying to tool’em; none able to drive; but all able to go with the tongue.

‘My Suffolk two-wheeler was placed near a party of this sort; and had I the pen of an Irving, or the humour of a Mathews, something might be made of the scene;

¹ Reverse this phrase, and you have, alas! a description of the stage coach of the present day.

² Why should a neckcloth be called a tie? Who made the noun of the verb to-tie, and what’s the sense?

but alas! I can only paint lithographically, slight in touch, wanting light and shade. An Oxford slap-bang, loaded in London; Windsor Blues, freighted at Reading; Reading coaches, chuck full at Dorking; a Mile-End coach-waggon (parish fashion) full of those who, if justice was done to them, would be left *en passant* in better keep than by going back to Bow; German coaches; Hanoverian cars; Petersburg sledges and *Phaetonees*; St. James's cabs; 'Bull and Mouth' barouches, waggoned by Exeter coachmen; gentlemen's drags adorned with larking blades. Some horsed by themselves and some by their friends, one or two well driven, but the majority d——d bad! I only drive two gallows, with reins in both hands, and whip over the shoulder; am therefore, poor in judgment, although bare-faced in opinion, and, John Bull like, will have one; and what's more, will write it; and as I am quite an *unknown* in fashion and coaching, perfectly fearless of pistols. It was both novel and amusing to hear Oxford boys talk. "By G——d! there's Stanhope, Paulett, Jones, Payne, Lord ——, and, *damme* that *lathy chap* Stevy—four greys and red roses! You talk of good ones, they're all humbugs in comparison. Put him behind a scratch team, or watch him on the Defiance, or ask old Thomaso; he's quite right, depend on't. My stars! did you see him on Tuesday? He would not be said nay to; flying through the park; serving them out right and left, and with a heavy *load*, made his ground good in great style. They say he had a bit of a scramble from a bull-headed wheeler at Hounslow; but his hands and his eyes were like lightning, and

with double thong well timed, brought all straight!" His friend Paulett stared and so did his guests.

'All this made me afterwards watch this youngster, and I confess he pleased me much. There's an ease, a total absence of affectation, a nerveless confidence, an extraordinary facility of hands (without any of that pretty sort of shifting and twirling in white gloves), which mark him at once to profess a thorough knowledge of his art aided by nature, with sufficient grace to stamp him elegant. I wish much for his acquaintance, that I may learn to work with one hand, and how to carry the tool.

'No place, no amusement, no holiday making, is so enchanting to the softer sex. Gentle and simple, grave and gay—all are on tip-toe of joy, and out jumps nature from both ends—eyes and feet, lords, ladies, tastily costumed, with roses and lilies untainted, or rather, unpainted by Bond Street; farmers' daughters and farmers' wives sparkling in silks, pleased with their friends' shorts and white tops, rosy in cheek, tinted by soft breezes and bottled ale; parasols for the sun, and ogling eyes for the parasols : *olla podrida* (à l'Espagnolle) here has its reign. Royalty, aristocracy, no exception in rank or station, thieves and justices; spendthrifts and misers, gamesters from high hell and low hell; the Stock Exchange to the Regent's Park; gentlemen aping lords, and lords aping grooms, music without harmony, glee singers with hoarse throats, waltz-dancing in six-foot stilts, boxers, with peering eyes, coming it strong for a cross, jockeys mum in speech, but d——d sly in looks; horse-dealers and horse-stealers, gipsies to tell your

fortune, and pick-pockets to ease you of it ; ladies burthened with virtue, and ladies much lighter without ; mothers watching to catch and daughters hoping to handle ; so on, *ad infinitum*.'

Patroclus winds up his very graphic description with the following loyal toast. Put 'Queen' for 'King,' and it's as good a one as ever.

A bumper of Burgundy fill, fill for me—
Give those who prefer it Champagne ;
But whatever the wine, it a bumper must be,
If we e'er drink a bumper again.
Now, now when the cares of the day are thrown by,
And all man's best feelings possess him,
The glow of the heart gives joy to the eye,
Here's a health to the King—God bless him !

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GREAT WESTERN ROAD.¹

OF the splendid travelling along one of the most important lines of coach road in the kingdom, the Great Western road, the following details with reference especially to the performances of the 'Telegraph' and the 'Quicksilver' mail-coaches, have been furnished me by a friend. I may just state in the first place that 'The Quicksilver mail,' commonly called 'The Devonport,' running to Exeter, 175 miles from London, did the journey in eighteen hours. It passed through Wincanton (a new route). A lamp was carried on each side of the coach, and one under the footboard.

'I am old enough,' says my friend, 'to remember the days of "the road" well, when our journey from Exeter to London was very different from what it is now. We then thought it very wonderful (as it really was) to go either in the "Quicksilver" mail in eighteen hours, or in

¹ A most invaluable book for travellers by road through England is 'Paterson's Roads,' in which you will find every road (turnpike and cross) described with distances, inns, etc., together with notes of all places worth speaking of that are passed on or near to the road. It is a book difficult to obtain, being, I believe, out of print, but, with the exception of the inns, which have (some of them) changed, it is the only standard work of its kind, and is really a book no dragsman should be without.

the "Telegraph" day coach in seventeen hours. The former went from Devonport to London, and by a road five or six miles longer than that by which the "Telegraph," a more recently established coach, went from Exeter to London. The "Telegraph" used to leave London at 5.30 in the morning, every day except Sunday throughout the year, and reached Exeter at 10.30 in the evening very regularly: so regularly that the people working in the fields used to be seen setting their watches by it. It also left Exeter every day at five o'clock in the morning (Exeter time, *i.e.* about 5.15 London time), and reached London at ten in the evening Exeter time. This was wonderful going, seventeen hours, including all stoppages, and breakfast and dinner about twenty minutes each. We used to call the distance by the "Telegraph" road 170 miles, but I see, looking at "Paterson's Roads," it is called 164½ miles. But that would be from the outskirts of Exeter to Hyde Park Corner, whereas the time went from the London Inn at Exeter to the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly. There were four coachmen who drove the coach every day, the two middle men meeting on the road and changing coaches, and the two starting men driving in the evening coach at night, one of the two middle men used to drive full 100 miles every day; he drove somewhat farther than any of the others, but the two middle men had of course the prime of the day, and all at once, without darkness in the winter. It used to cost us then 3*l.* 10*s.* and 3*l.* inside, and 2*l.* 10*s.* and 2*l.* outside, one way costing more than the other, I forget why. I have given these par-

ticulars of the "Telegraph," because I travelled much oftener by that coach than by the "Quicksilver" mail, and knew more about it. The "Telegraph" used to go by Andover, Amesbury, Deptford Inn, and across Salisbury Plain, by Wincanton, Ilchester, and Ilminster, which was reckoned the shortest way. The "Quicksilver" went by Salisbury, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Yeovil, Crewkerne, and Chard, a few miles longer, and more in the dark. The same guard went all the way in the "Telegraph." It was hard work for both coachmen and guards.'

Between Bagshot and Basingstoke you pass over Star Hill, very dangerous ground for fast coaches, there being two shoots upon it. Ten miles in fifty minutes was the time allowed on this ground; and on Harford Bridge flat will be found the best five miles for a coach in twenty-three minutes.

The mails for the western counties were brought from the General Post Office in the City to their coaches at the Gloucester Coffee House in Piccadilly,¹ in carts drawn by fast-trotting blood horses, and the bags were given over to the mail guards there. The Bristol, Exeter, and Bath mails started at seven in the evening. Most stages down these roads started from Hatchett's, 'The White Horse Cellar.'

'Travelling one night by the Bath mail, and going at the usual terrific pace over that level six miles be-

¹ See the excellent coloured engraving representing these mails preparing to start in front of the Gloucester Coffee House (on its site is now the St. James's Hotel), from a picture by James Pollard.

tween Hounslow and Staines, a place which from the team being called upon to go at such a high rate of speed, and many lives being thereby lost, earned for itself the name of the *hospital ground*, the dust almost blinding us from the little light there was, I fancied,' says my friend, relating the story, 'I heard a shout ahead, which I afterwards found I was right in assuming came from the guard of the Bristol mail, just in front of us. One moment more and we came to a sudden stop by our leaders falling, and the main bar unhooking itself. The wheelers passed over the leaders as they lay, and when I picked myself up—for I was half thrown off—I found the leaders under the splinter-bar. A flock of sheep had been frightened by the mail in front of us, and had stood stock still in the middle of the road and we had run into them: there were several lying dead on the ground. Backing the coach, we got our leaders safely out, and the damages being repaired—a matter well understood in those days—we finished our stage and reported cheap mutton for the morrow for them.'

On this road there were, besides the mail, 'The Regulator,' which ran through Devizes, and the 'York House' of which stage-coach the Duke of Beaufort writes as follows:—'Jack Sprorson and Jem Adlam drove this coach from London to Marlborough one day, and back the next, meeting near Newbury, about fifty-two or fifty-three miles out of London. Old Edwards, I think this was his name, brought the coach up from Bath in the morning to breakfast at Marlborough, and took it back at night after tea to Bath. It is $107\frac{1}{4}$ miles: $32\frac{3}{4}$ from

Bath to Marlborough, and $74\frac{1}{2}$ on to London. They dined both up and down at Mrs. Botham's, the "Pelican," at Speenham Land or Newbury, and out of London breakfasted at Botham's, the "Windmill," at Salt Hill. They left both ends at 7 A.M. and did the journey under eleven hours—about ten and a half hours. The "York House" struggled on even after the Great Western Railroad was opened, running to Haylane near Wotton Bassett. After it was knocked off the road, that first-rate coachman, Sprorson, set up a coach from Devizes to Reading, and earned his living. He stuck to it as long as he could, and always had the goodwill of his neighbours and passengers. Sprorson and Adlam are still alive, the former is managing a club at Leeds or Bradford.'

Shackell's coaches to Reading were well patronised.

On the Exeter road, besides the 'Quicksilver,' or Devonport mail, and the 'Telegraph,' ran the 'Exeter Subscription,' from the 'Bull and Mouth,' and the 'Coronet.' Also the 'Herald,' a day coach from the 'Saracen's Head,' Snow Hill.

The old and light Salisbury coaches did well on this road, and so did Monk's coach to Basingstoke.

In 1836 the fastest coaches (known as the crack coaches) were those running between

London and Brighton, $51\frac{1}{2}$ miles in $5\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

„ Shrewsbury, 154 miles in 15 hours.

„ Exeter, 171 miles in 17 hours.

„ Manchester, 187 miles in 19 hours.

„ Holyhead, 261 miles in 26 hrs. 55 mins.

London and Liverpool, 203 miles in 20 hours 50 minutes.

On one occasion the Devonport mail (the 'Quick-silver') travelling with foreign and colonial letters, accomplished the journey of 216 miles, including stoppages, in 21 hours and 14 minutes.

The guard of the Devonport mail, who had travelled with it on December 27, 1836, from Ilminster to London, a distance of 140 miles, stated that the journey was a most trying one to both men and cattle. The storm commenced when they reached Wincanton, and never afterwards ceased. The wind blew fresh, and in crossing the plains the snow and sleet drove in their faces so as almost to blind them. Between Amesbury and Andover two pairs of leaders were employed instead of the usual pair, for here the snow-drifts were mountainous, and the drifting would have turned the coachman's leaders. Between Andover and Whitchurch the mail stuck fast in one of the snow-drifts, and the horses, then driven by the coachman, in attempting to get it out were nearly buried.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.



CHAPTER XX.

COACHING ON MAY DAY. BEARING REINS.

MAY DAY was the great day for stage-coaches to race against time, and some of them with that object in view carried no passengers. From the 'Country Mercury' (May 8, 1830) we learn that—'Saturday being May Day, the usual competition took place between the London coaches.' The 'Independent Tallyho,' which ran between London and Birmingham, performed a feat altogether unparalleled in the annals of coaching, having travelled the distance of 109 miles in 7 hours and 39 minutes; thus far surpassing the feat of the 'Quicksilver,' mentioned in the preceding chapter. The following is the correct account of the time it took to perform the distances horsed by the various proprietors:—

Mr. Horne, from London to Colney, $17\frac{1}{4}$ miles, in 1 hour 6 minutes.

Mr. Bowman, from Colney to Redburn, $17\frac{1}{2}$ miles, in 1 hour 26 minutes (6 minutes for breakfast).

Mr. Morrell, Redburn to Hockcliffe, $12\frac{1}{4}$ miles, in 1 hour 4 minutes.

Mr. Warden, Hockcliffe to Shenley, 11 miles, in 47 minutes.

Mr. May, Shenley to Daventry, 24 miles, in 1 hour 49 minutes.

Mr. Garner, Daventry to Coventry, $19\frac{1}{4}$ miles, in 1 hour 12 minutes ; Coventry to Birmingham, $17\frac{3}{4}$ miles, in 1 hour 15 minutes.

The original 'Tally-ho' performed the same distance in 7 hours 50 minutes.

On May Day, 1838, the Shrewsbury 'Greyhound' with no passengers except a friend or two of the proprietors, accomplished the distance from London at the rate of twelve miles an hour including stoppages !

Numerous complaints were made from time to time about the almost general practice of stage-coaches—day coaches especially—not carrying guards. 'Securitas,' writing in 1827, says, that it is his earnest wish the addition of a guard to every stage coach may ere long become prevalent. How the coachmen managed without a guard seems now a mystery.

On the subject of bearing-up coach horses 'The Old Forester' writes as follows :—' There is no place where Nimrod is more at home than on the coach-box, and I see with pleasure he has resumed the subject of "the road."

' On the subject of "bearing reins," I quite agree with him. It is not only a relief to the arm of the driver, but to the horse himself in a long journey. The look of a thing goes a great way in England, and no man who wishes to turn out well would dispense with the bearing rein. One of your correspondents thinks horses will go safer without the bearing rein, and brings in the Continental prac-

tice as proof. I also have been on the Continent a good deal, and have seen the fallacy of that argument. I have also travelled a good deal in mails and fast coaches, and never yet saw a horse fairly down in one of them. I have seen a wheel horse sometimes all but down, and only kept on his legs by a bearing rein. In posting in France and Italy, I have seen horses fairly down ; and about four years ago, between St. Denis and Paris, in a diligence, I saw all five horses down together. Luckily it was on level ground, or we should have had all our necks broken. The very reason the French postilion gives for wearing those enormous jack-boots is to *save the rider's leg* in case of *his horse falling on him*.

‘That such is frequently the case is proved by their using those boots still. Some time ago I was travelling in a diligence, and remonstrating with the *conducteur—Anglicè* guard—on the absurdity of those enormous boots. Presently, in crossing a check of the road, the near wheeler tripped, and his rider not holding him up, down he came. The postilion quietly slipped his leg out of the boot, none the worse for the weight of the horse on it. “There’s for you,” said the Frenchman ; “if that postilion had been dressed as an English post-boy his leg would have been broken.” “True,” I exclaimed, “but then an English post-boy would not have allowed his horse to *fall with him*.”’

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BRIGHTON ROAD.

OF the London and Brighton road—perhaps the most nearly perfect, and certainly the most fashionable, of all coaching roads (a fashion which, like the top boot, never changes), it would be unpardonable not to give some details. I therefore present to my readers, in this and the following two chapters, an interesting account of coachmen and guards employed on it about forty or fifty years ago, which was contributed to the pages of the ‘Sporting Magazine’ in 1828, by an able writer whose *nom de plume* was ‘Viator Junior.’

‘Great as the improvement made in modern travelling has everywhere been, it has on no road been more conspicuous than on that between Brighton and the Metropolis. Twenty years ago the quickest coaches never performed the journey in less than nine hours and a half, or ten hours; and, although still a young man, I can perfectly remember my father relating as an exploit that he had posted on a most particular and express occasion to his own door, four miles short of London, in eight hours. It is needless to tell your readers that *every* coach now runs from *yard* to *yard* in seven, and some of them,

the quickest, in less than six hours. It is not at all unusual to see Mr. Snow's "Dart" at the "Elephant and Castle" at a quarter past eleven, having left Brixton at six ; and several others—Goodman's coaches and the "Item," for instance—keep the same time.

' Within my recollection the Brighton road was always a good one ; but from the innumerable improvements made on it during the last ten or twelve years, it is now as close to perfection, and very nearly as much shortened, as it ever can be. On neither of the new lines of roads is there occasion more than twice or thrice for the drag chain, even by the most stiff-necked team ; and the old road, with the exception of Reigate and Clayton Hills, (which are certainly puzzlers for a fresh caught one to take a load either up or down), is equally free from difficulty or danger, and both are capitally hard and good for wheels at all seasons of the year.

' This excellence of the roads, however, has produced one defect,—it has nearly annihilated the breed of coachmen between Brighton and London. Out of a list of forty-five that I have now before me, who are regularly at work, there are not more than seven or eight who are worth looking at as real artists—workmen who can "hit 'em and hold 'em." And I could name more than one or two of the lot who are, even on such a road as this, unfit to be trusted with the lives of their passengers, and totally incompetent to take along a heavy load in safety at the pace at which their coaches are timed. This very day I saw one of "the awkward squad" keep his coach on her legs by pure accident in bringing her with a heavy

load round the corner by the King's Stables ; and as his attitude was rather good, I'll endeavour to describe it. His bench was very low, and he himself is rather a tall man : his legs tucked under him as far as possible, were as wide apart as if he was across one of his wheels ; both hands had hold of the reins, which, though perfectly slack, were all but within his teeth ; his whip was stuck beside him (in general, however, it is hanging down between his wheel horses about the middle of the foot board), and, to complete the picture, his mouth was gaping wide open, like Curran's Irishman endeavouring to catch the English accent. *South of York* I have not often seen this man's fellow ; but surely Providence must keep a most especial guard over him ; for I understand he has worked for some years on the same coach without an accident. And judging from appearances, it is a daily miracle that he gets to his journey's end.

' Not long ago too, I had the fortune of witnessing, as a passenger, one or two hairbreadth escapes on one of the professedly flash afternoon coaches. First or last, I never saw a fellow with more conceit and less knowledge of the art than our self-styled coachman. And I could not help thinking it a great pity to have deprived the shop-board of his services to expose him on the bench. We were very near having a *case* with our first team out of Brighton. Both his wheel horses were bad holders, and the leaders (both of them thoroughbred) were impatient and fidgety at the rattling of the bars, and could not be kept—at least my friend could not keep them—out of a canter. He put his chain on down the hill by New

Timbers, and all was right enough ; but being too busy with his cigar (the march of intellect !), he let his team get well on the crown of the hill, *just above his change*, before he attempted to pull up. The consequence was they could not be stopped ; and away we went. I have no hesitation in saying, with a top-heavy load, or with anything like a ditch at hand, nothing could have saved us from being floored ; for from his awkward pulling and hauling at them (he had his reins clubbed into the bargain), instead of keeping his coach steady in the middle of the road, we were alternately in the watercourse on each side, and we pulled up at last only in consequence of the horses getting to their own stable door. In his next team a little fanning was necessary. And Dominie Sampson himself could not have made a more diabolical attempt at hitting a near leader. I can scarcely, however, expect to be believed, when I tell you that he actually hit his off-side passenger on the roof behind him every time he endeavoured to hit his off-side wheel horse. Such nevertheless was the fact. But to cut a long story short, we got to London safe and sound in rather more than six hours, having been in jeopardy of our lives the whole time.

‘ Now I would not have you imagine, Mr. Editor, that I am more nervous on a coach box than my neighbours : on the contrary, having been much attached to, and worked a great deal on the road ever since I was the height of a whip, I have no reason to be so ; but I must confess that with such “ impostors ” (as Bill Williams used to call them) it is rather nervous work, and I think

no coachmaster is warranted in committing the lives of his customers, the public, to such incompetent hands. I shall keep my eye on one or two of these "Flying Brightons," and if there is not an alteration, and an improvement too before long, I will show up the delinquents, both master and servant, by name.

'There is a very old and good servant of the public still at work on this road, whose long and praiseworthy career deserves to be recorded. His name is Hine; and although never a first-rate performer, he has been, as far back as I can remember, from his constant sobriety, civility and steadiness, the chief favourite (especially with families) on the old Reigate and Clayton road. When I first knew him, full twenty years ago, he had been for a great length of time on Orton and Bradford's coach—which gradually declined after he left it—out of "the Bull" yard, Holborn, and it is only within the last fourteen years that he has turned "Rioter" (as Ned Burford used to call it) on the coach which he now drives, the "Alert," and a capital coach it is. I should be happy to take an even bet that he has carried more families for the last ten years than any other three coachmen out of Brighton; and I am delighted to see the old man still in good health and feathering his nest so comfortably.

'Goodman's "Times" and "Regent" are among the best horsed coaches going, and, from what I can see, have their full share of business. Sam, however, himself, though a tolerable coachman, is not to be named in the same day with Mr. Snow. But it must be allowed

that few can equal, and none, not even Peer himself, or Bill Williams, can excel this great artist. It is quite a treat to compare his perfect ease and elegant attitude on his box in turning out of the "Spread Eagle" yard, in Gracechurch Street, with the uncouth feature, and awkward catchings and clawings of some of his brethren, his own man, Ned Russell, for instance. Ned, however, once started over London Bridge, is not worse than some of his neighbours.

'Gray, on the "Regent," is a very fair, steady coachman. I remember him, fourteen or fifteen years ago, on a very seedy concern, called the "Princess of Wales," through Horsham; and having had my eye a good deal on him since that period, I have no hesitation in pronouncing him a very efficient coachman, and a most excellent servant in every respect. Mosely too, who used to be against him on the same road on the "Duke of Norfolk," and is now at work on Goodman's "Midday Times," is nothing less than a very capital performer.

'Of Mr. Stevenson, as I have never seen enough of him at work to enable me to judge, I shall of course say nothing; but he has the reputation of being a good coachman, and I wish him success. He is warmly patronised by the public; which, I am sorry to say, has had the effect of creating a good deal of illiberality and jealousy against him with some of the other coachmen; and I took the liberty of giving one of them, with whom I was travelling the other day, a good jawbation for his selfishness and impertinence.

'As I hold all *safety patents* about coaches exceed-

ingly cheap, I have not given myself the trouble of examining "Cook's Patent Life Preserver," which is fitted to Mr. Gray's "Bolt-in-Tun" coach the "Patriot;" but I will relate a rather good anecdote of an incident of which I was a witness a few days ago. Just as Pickett was starting with his "Union" coach out of Holborn, up comes a fussy old citizen, puffing and blowing like a grampus: "Pray, coachman, is this here the patriotic Life Preserver Safety coach?" "Yes, sir," says Pickett, not hearing above half of his passenger's question. "Room behind, sir; jump up, if you please; very late this morning." "Why, where's the machinery?" cries the old one. "There, sir," replied a passenger (a young Cantab I suspect), pointing to a heavy trunk of mine that was swung underneath. "In that box, sir; that's where the machinery works." "Ah," quoth the old man, climbing up quite satisfied, "wonderful inventions now-a-days, sir. We shall all get safe to Brighton; no chance of an accident by this coach!" Doubtless it would have been no very difficult task to have persuaded this old fool that we were going by steam; for the day was wet, and the cigars were smoking most merrily in front all the road down.

'Few of your readers, I dare say, have an idea of the money that is annually dropped on this favourite road. There are at this moment (in the height of the season) twenty-four coaches (including the mail) out of Brighton, with a corresponding number out of London, every day. Now, at a moderate computation, sixteen of these at least are kept on through the winter; and

they must each of them earn, the whole year through, 10*l.* daily, to earn anything like their expenses up and down. These sixteen permanent coaches alone, therefore, must receive nearly 60,000*l.* a year *merely to keep them going*; and the eight butterflies, as I have heard them called, or summer coaches for six months, must earn nearly 15,000*l.* more. Looking, however, at the lowness of my calculation as to expense, and at the excellent waybills that most of them carry, both summer and winter, I am quite satisfied that, including gratuities to coachmen, etc., not a farthing less than 100,000*l.* per annum is spent by the public between Brighton and London; and for the sake of the wheels, for which I have always been a staunch advocate, I wish it were twice as much.

‘Taking up a newspaper a few days ago, I was very sorry to observe the death of Mr. Horne, the largest proprietor by far in England, and one of the best that ever put a horse to public conveyance. The public has sustained a great loss by his decease; for he conducted the whole of his immense concern in a most creditable and spirited manner; and his coaches, taken altogether, were better horsed than those into any other yard in London, my old ally Mrs. Nelson’s, being always excepted. I have not heard what arrangements are likely to take place, but I should think it will be difficult to find any *one customer* with capital sufficient to take to the whole of his various establishments, amounting as they do almost to a monopoly of the best roads out of London.

‘On looking over what I have written I find that I have omitted noticing what I hear is a very steady, quiet, good coach, namely, George Sherwood’s “Magnet.” I have not seen much of it personally, except *into London*; but I must do Sherwood the justice to say, that on that ground at least he is most magnificently horsed, and I like the appearance of his coach, altogether, very much. Long, therefore, may the “Magnet” continue to attract!’

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BRIGHTON ROAD (*continued.*)

'IN my last letter to you I pulled up, I think, on George Sheward's "Magnet;" and the time allowed for washing out our mouths being now expired, I proceed once more to take hold of my whip and reins, and "wag on" another yard or two,¹ on the same coach. I am sorry, however, to say that my "bill" is but a short one, and still more sorry to observe that for some time past it has been but too often the case; and that this very quick and capitally horsed coach has fallen off for the last two months most lamentably and unaccountably. Unaccountable it certainly appears, for no drag at the same hour is turned out better, if so well. The time is accurately kept; the fares are the same as all its neighbours; the coach itself affords the same accommodation for passengers; yet, although all this, and more, is done for the satisfaction of the public, it carries decidedly the worst loads by far of anything out of Brighton or

¹ 'A favourite expression of Ned Burford (of whom I had before spoken when starting with his coach from the "Cellar" in Piccadilly)—"Now we'll wag on a yard or two further."'

London at ten o'clock. Were I asked, however, to find out the loose screw, I should say that, in the first place, coming out of private stables in London, instead of a regular public yard, such as the "Cross Keys," "Spread Eagle," "Bolt-in-Tun," etc. etc., militates very greatly against every coach that adopts the plan; as there cannot be half the power either to form or to hold a "connection" well together; and chance custom, let the friends of the proprietor or coachman be ever so numerous, genteel, or zealous, will go but a short way towards paying the expenses for any great length of time. Secondly, the perpetual changing and turning back of the coachmen on the road must have annoyed the passengers not a little; and it has, moreover, been the means of Sheward's losing one of the very best waggoners out of Brighton—young Cook, who was at last so disgusted at being thus shifted and bandied about, "between Hell and Hackney," that he cut the concern, and has taken, I have reason to believe, by no means a small number of the "Magnet's" old friends to the "Regulator," on which he is now at work.

'Sheward has played his cards very ill in throwing his trumps out of his hand; for Cook is not only a first-rate coachman, but one of the pleasantest fellows to travel with one can easily meet, and therefore a most dangerous customer on a cheap opposition, that starts half an-hour earlier, and runs to the same end of "the village." Neither am I by any means singular in the opinion that had Sheward stuck to this one coach, without having anything to do with the "Age," it would have been better

both for him and it ; for, in point of fact, the connection is not large enough for the support of both ; and as the one robs the other, they neither of them load as they should do ; and the old proverb " between two stools " is most unhappily but truly exemplified. Splendidly, indeed, as his side of the last-mentioned flash concern is worked all through, and Corinthian as is the *tout ensemble* of the turn-out, I cannot conceive that it does more than average its expenses, if so much ; and on many journeys within the last month I know that the up-coaches have been fed very plentifully from the " New Dart." Sheward knows all this as well as I can tell him, and I hope he will take in good part what I have said, for he may be assured he has my best wishes, and that I would gladly see his coaches doing as well as he himself could desire. I will conclude by giving him " one hint more." If his down " Magnet " loads light it is a bad job certainly, but let him give his stock the benefit of " the chance," and not wear them out in galloping and hunting them against a cocktail pair-horse concern that there can be neither honour nor profit in beating.

' The mention of the " Age " induces me naturally to speak of Mr. Stevenson. Since I last addressed you I have had the pleasure of seeing this gentleman at work, and have seldom, if ever, been more gratified. I am not aware, to quote a vulgar saying, if he was " born with a silver spoon in his mouth," but I certainly think he must have been brought into the world with a whip and reins in his hand ; for, in point of ease and elegance of execution as a light coachman, he beats nineteen out of

twenty of the regular working dragsmen into fits, and as an amateur is only to be approached by two or three of the chosen few whose names will live for ever in the annals of the B. D. C.—Sir Henry Peyton and Mr. Walker, for instance. What he may be with bad and heavy cattle I will not pretend to say; but, judging from the manner in which his teams are put together (and he has some awkward customers amongst them), I think nothing could come much amiss to him. I sincerely hope his side of the “Age” is doing well, and that every one of the crowd assembled in Castle Square three times a week to see him start may prove a passenger and a friend to him all through the winter.

‘In giving you the anecdote about the “Patriot,” to which I was witness on Pickett’s “Union,” in my last communication, I omitted to notice his partner Egerton, who drives the other side of this (now) excellent coach. In point of manners, deportment, and conversation, he ranks far above almost all dragsmen with whom I have at any time travelled; and if he pursues the same obliging and unassuming mode of conducting himself (of which there is little doubt), there is no fear that he will be as popular on the road, and as much patronised by the public, as old Hine himself; and this, let me tell him, is not to be attained by everyone. He was for some time at work out of the “Spread Eagle” yard, on Chaplin and Snow’s Worthing “Sovereign,” and left when he quitted that coach a good name behind him. No man, indeed, is more highly spoken of amongst his associates, and it was only the other day that William Snow was regretting

in my presence that he was not working for their party instead of being where he now is, and where, I hope and think, he is doing as well as his best friends could wish.

‘As I have mentioned William Snow’s name, it may be as well to “lug in” my opinion of him, as old John Lawrence would say, as a dragsman. Having heard a great deal of him as an artist, I took an opportunity of travelling with him a few days ago on the extra “Dart,” but I am sorry to say I was much disappointed in his performance, which, considering his reputation as a coachman, I thought extremely mediocre; and he certainly has no pretensions to the character of a first-rate workman. As to a comparison with his brother Bob (which I had understood he had no occasion to shrink from), there is more coachmanship and knowledge of the art in Robert’s little finger than in all William’s body put together, and although a very civil and cheerful fellow to travel with, I cannot assign him even an “Exeter class” in the “honours” of dragsmanship, but must rank him only amongst the “vulgar herd,” as we used to say at Oxford.

‘Before I dismiss the name of Snow, let me express my very great pleasure at the way in which the whole of Bob’s coaches—the “Dart,” “Comet,” and “Sovereign”—have been loading this season; and if he takes my advice, he will not kick down any part of what he has earned with them by continuing his horses on that suicidal night opposition, the “Evening Star.” Both he and Sam Goodman may rely on it that old Crossweller does not care one button for the harm it can do the

mail ; and, if they keep it on through the winter, their monthly accounts will speak pretty plainly for themselves as to the harm it will do to their own summer earnings. It will be sure, moreover, to make the "Item" a fixture on the road ; for, as they well know, this beautifully-horsed coach is in the hands of a terrible stiff-necked obstinate party when once offended, and in the winter-time, when the City swells are behind their counters and "minding the shops," this will be by no means a pointless thorn in the side of the "Dart" and "New Times." There is a coachman, by the way, at work on the "Star" who deserves a better place, and I hope before long that Bill Penny may be seen once more by daylight, for where you find one better, you will travel with twenty inferior performers.

'And here I may observe that, in spite of all that Nimrod brings forward to justify his predilection for night work, I cannot persuade myself to view it in the same favourable colours, or to consider the life of a night coachman an enviable one for a constancy. It is all very pleasant for a gentleman on a fine night, either summer or winter, to work forty or fifty miles on a journey for business or amusement, (and I have found as much delight in doing so as any man, and have often abandoned my claret for the coach box, as poor Skinner, on the Glasgow mail, from Boroughbridge to Doncaster, if alive, and his partner, could testify). But when we take into the account the perpetual privation of natural repose (for no man, as the Irishman says, can get a good night's rest by day), and the ravages on the constitution produced by

it and incessant exposure to the worst vicissitudes of weather at the worst periods; the damps and fogs and "peltings of the storm" which these poor fellows have constantly to endure in darkness, and sometimes almost in solitude, with no one but the guard and "the mad woman" about the coach, to say nothing of the teams—blind ones, bow-kickers, and cripples of every description unfit to show by day—that not a few of them have to drive, and the rotten reins and worn-out harness that some proprietors, to their eternal shame, persist in keeping at work in the dark; when we consider all this, I repeat, we shall not find much to envy in the situation of a night coachman. "There is balm in Gilead," however, as Nicol Jarvie observes; and where the guard and coachman have pulled well together, I have seen in my time an infinity of fun and lark upon the road between supper and breakfast. One night in particular on the Dover mail—but this, and another anecdote or two of night work (in which I shall not forget my friend George Cooper on the York "Highflyer"), I must reserve for a future opportunity, and get back meantime to the neighbourhood of the Steyne.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BRIGHTON ROAD (*concluded*).

‘ I HAVE already spoken of the “ Regulator,” not so, however, of the office from which it starts. By some of the dragsmen about Brighton it is called (and not inappropriately) “ The Beehive,” being the place that gives birth to the swarm of cheap concerns, and an *elegant* lot, take them altogether, they certainly are ! As I do not profess to be the historian of “ pair-horse coaches,” I shall waste but few words on the “ Royal Exchange” and “ Hero ;” observing only that one of them (the first, I believe) was, and, for aught I know to the contrary, still is, horsed out of Brighton by a dealer of the name of Hayler, or Hamer—no bad judge, it would appear, of the value of the old saying “ short accounts make long friends,” for every night after the coach comes in he draws the “ blunt,” or no “ flesh” is forthcoming the next morning. To the Adonis of “ The Beehive,” old Tommy (on Mr. Stevenson’s late coach the “ Coronet ”), in his white castor, it would take a far abler pen than mine to do justice. I shall make my bow to him, therefore, with the remark, that I believe him to be a very excellent judge of stock (would he not be therefore better placed on the “ Exchange ?”) and that if

his passengers are at any time displeased with him, they must be guilty of the most gross ingratitude in the world; for he shows them, beyond a doubt, the most extraordinary countenance of any man on the road. Mr. Genn's old servant, Charles Newman, drives, and I believe horses, part of the other side of this concern; but were it not to notice his coach—I had almost written—I should pass him over *sub silentio*; as it gives me no pleasure to find fault, and it is out of my power to compliment him on his performance as a dragsman, which, considering the number of years he has been at it, is but a slovenly piece of business, and, meet him whenever you will, his horses are never in hand as they should be. Let me, however, give him his due. I have ridden with him more than once (not on his present coach) and always found him exceedingly civil, obliging, and good-tempered; and I believe his career has been singularly fortunate so far as regards the chapter of accidents. The drag he is just now at work upon, his own fancy, I am given to understand, is certainly a most extraordinary one, considering the "march of intellect" on the road as elsewhere; being built—though on some fantastic new-fangled construction—on the old principle of six in and twelve out, very roomy, high and lofty from the ground, and altogether as heavy in appearance and reality as the old waggons of fifty years back. If I mistake not, they advertise it to run in six hours; but in my opinion the cattle have yet to be foaled that will keep this time with it three journeys together.

‘If in anything that I have remarked I seem to

underrate the merits of "The Beehive" and its economists, I beg pardon very sincerely for so doing. But having an unhappy prejudice against cheap articles in general, of all cheap things in this world, "except cheap wine," I hold cheap coaches in the greatest and most particular abomination; and whenever I see the words "cheap travelling" posted up at the door of an office, I always feel disposed involuntarily to add "and nasty" to the advertisement. I recognised the other day a well-known face on the "Royal Clarence," through Horsham and Kingston, and found on enquiry that it belonged to "The Holmes," brother to my old acquaintance Christopher of Oxford, one of the largest country proprietors going, and the sharpest thorn that old Costar ever had or will have in his side. Will Mr. Goodman forgive me if I tell him that I looked twice before I could believe the evidence of my eyes, that it bore the name of the proprietor of the "Regent" and "New Times"! Holmes and his son are both at work on this coach, but I certainly cannot compliment them on the appearance of their cattle, into Brighton at least, and if Mr. Goodman remembers some observations he once made at a coach dinner at Huntingdon about one of the "Stamfords," on which he and I were travelling, he will find them apply pretty closely to this namechild of the late Lord High Admiral. I should observe that Holmes himself takes the "Clarence" from Horsham to Kingston, and having lately had an opportunity of comparing his stock with that of his partner into Brighton, I was not a little struck with the difference of condition; but twelve miles an hour over

Mr. Goodman's ground, and four and a half over his own, will account for anything.

'I find I must once more retrace my steps to the office, No. 52 East Street, having hitherto omitted all notice of poor old Hine's partner, a very deserving young man of the name of Bristow, who, from being a partner in the establishment, has raised himself within the last few years to the situation of coachman and proprietor on the "Alert." He and the ever-green old veteran, horse it between them up to Reigate, from which Mr. Grace of Sutton, I believe, takes it to the village of that name, and thence Mr. Horne into the "Old Bell" yard, Holborn. I cannot speak very intimately of Bristow's performance, but I believe him to be a fair coachman, and he appears uncommonly strong and powerful on his box.

'Of the artists of "the Blue Office" it is not, of course, my intention to speak, having travelled with but one of them, who is now at work, and of him I have already recorded my opinion. I may say, however, that Mr. Crossweller's coaches in general are capitally horsed. He has, indeed, the reputation of doing his work as well as any man out of Brighton, and I think it must be a fastidious eye that could find much fault with the specimens of his stock that I have seen in the "Item," "Rocket," &c., &c. He bears, moreover, amongst the servants a most excellent character, and I have had good reason to believe is a very worthy man, as well as one of the best horse-masters in Christendom.

'I cannot conclude this article (and my paper reminds

me speedily to do so) without once more adverting to the merits of a coach I have already named, the "New Dart." Believe me, gentle reader, it is one of the very best on the road; and let me counsel you by no means to omit travelling this autumn with both George Deere and Ned Pattenden; for it would, I assure you, be a *service* of considerable difficulty to find two better dragsmen or more obliging fellows out of any yard, not in Brighton alone, but the whole of London. I hope the proprietors intend to keep both sides on during the winter, as it will be a thousand pities to throw such artists out of regular employment; and working alternate weeks, which, if one side is dropped, I suppose they will be obliged to do, is hardly sufficient (in winter) to make the pot boil, and not at all commensurate with the deserts of either one or the other.

' Your patience, Mr. Editor, I should think must now be at an end. I beg your forgiveness for having trespassed on it so long, and conclude by giving you a list of coaches out of Brighton on the 1st October, 1828, with the various hours at which they started for London and the names of the dragsmen now at work. As a matter of reference it may hereafter be interesting, and I think you will find it perfectly correct.

' VIATOR JUN.

' P.S.—I must take an early opportunity of travelling with both Clary and Jordan on that first-rate coach, the "Comet," for, from everything that I can learn of them, they are precisely the sort of artists that Bob Snow, for the sake of consistency, should have always about him.

| Names | Offices | Hours | Dragsmen |
|--------------------|---|------------|---|
| 'Dart' . . . | 18 Castle Square. . . | 6 A.M. | Bob Snow, up and down. |
| 'Item' . . . | Blue Coach Office . . . | " | Mellish, up and down. |
| 'New Times' . | Goodman's, Castle Square. | 7 A.M. | Sam Goodman, up and down. |
| 'Royal Exchange' . | Beehive, Castle Square. | " | |
| 'Royal Clarence' . | Goodman's, 52 East Street. | 9 A.M. | The Holmes and Son. |
| 'Alert' . . . | " | " | Hine and Bristow. |
| 'Regulator' . . | Beehive, Castle Square. | 9½ A.M. | Young Cook and Adams. |
| 'Comet' . . . | 18 Castle Square. . . | 10 A.M. | Clary and Jordan. |
| 'Patriot' . . . | 7 Castle Square . . . | " | Harding |
| 'Magnet' . . . | 5 Castle Square . . . | " | Womack and young Callow. |
| 'Regent' . . . | Goodman's, Castle Square. | 10 A.M. | Cray and Goodmans Brothers. |
| 'True Blue' . . | Blue Office | " | Mellish and Scriven. |
| 'Ninon' . . . | 52 and 53 East Street . | 11 A.M. | Pickett and Egerton. |
| 'Age' | 5 Castle Square . . . | 12 O'CLOCK | Mr. Stevenson |
| 'Coronet' . . . | Beehive, Castle Square. | " | Old Tommy and C. Newman. |
| 'New Dart' . . | 135 North Street, and 18 Castle Square. | " | George Deere and Ned Pattenden. |
| 'Royal George' . | Blue Office | " | Bugeroll and J. Newman. |
| 'Rocket' . . . | Blue Office | 2 P.M. | Houldsworth and young C. Newman. |
| 'Times' | Goodman's Office . . . | 3 P.M. | Mosely and Ellis. |
| 'Sovereign' . . | 18 Castle Square . . . | " | Ned Russell, up and down ; sometimes W. Snow. |
| 'Hero' | Beehive, Castle Square. | " | |
| 'Evening Star' . | 18 Castle Square, and Goodman's. | 10 P.M. | Penny and Rumble. |
| 'Royal Mail' . | Blue Office | " | Farley and Allen. |

N.B.—An extra coach, from 18 Castle Square, at eight o'clock every Saturday morning, driven by William Snow.

'The "Vivid" did its journey in five hours and a quarter.

'Your readers will observe a blank in the column of dragsmen opposite to the "Hero" and "Royal Exchange."

To speak the truth I have never thought it worth my while to enquire the names of the "pair-horse" performers; but I believe that one Carter has something to do with the driving of the "Hero," and Hayler's horse-keeper, perhaps, drives or drove the other.'

That some of the men who acted as Jehus and guards should have done so through all kinds of weather, proves that there is something excessively attractive in the life they lead. The Brighton road has always been especially fortunate in its choice of aristocratic coachmen. Besides Sir Vincent Cotton, who drove 'The Age,' the Marquis of Worcester, father of the present Duke of Beaufort, drove the 'Beaufort;'¹ while the Hon: Fred. Jerningham, a son of Lord Stafford, drove the Brighton day mail. No fees were solicited on these coaches; yet all of them pocketed their 'tips' with as much readiness and relish as would the poorest 'Knight of the Whip.'

¹ There is a capital picture, a coloured engraving, of this stage-coach starting from the West-end 'Bull and Mouth' Coach Office, in Regent Street Circus, Piccadilly.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SIR JOHN FAGG.

IN addition to the notices of coachmen which I have already given, I append, as an example of what an amateur artist should be, the following account of Sir John Fagg, the Kentish baronet, who died last year, and who is spoken of by the writer of the notice, signing himself 'Amateur,' as a man 'whose whole heart and soul is centred in the whip.'

'The individual to whom I allude,' says Amateur,¹ 'is Sir John Fagg, living within a few miles from Canterbury, and who may justly boast of as neat a turn-out as any in East Kent. The *tout ensemble* is imposing at the very first glance. The worthy baronet in his entire establishment appears to preserve the "modus in rebus," and to aim after the attainment of a neat equipage—not a gaudy one. Greys are his favourite colour, and the resplendent brass, together with the smooth shining leather, speaks volumes in praise of the industry of his domestics.

'No small share of labour must be expended in preserving such extreme neatness. The vehicle Sir John is

¹ 'Sporting Magazine,' 1826.

in the habit of driving is a landau, with a dickey or a rumble-tumble behind, in which sit the two servants, whose appearance seems to testify that they are by no means unworthy of such an honour. For the neat kerseymere breeches, with boot-tops white as snow, are all of a piece with the rest of the equipage, whilst their agility and quickness when wanted by their master is a plain proof that they are of the "right sort." Nothing, I think, is more disgusting than to see a lazy rascal creeping down from a carriage as if afraid of breaking his stupid pate, and with mouth wide open hesitating to perform the wishes of his master.

'How different is the conduct of these agile fellows, who, when approaching a gate or anything of the kind, are to be seen jumping with readiness from their seats, although their master may be tooling away at the rate of ten miles an hour. Sir John, I understand, is a good master, and thus it is that his servants are so attentive to his wishes. In short, that which by others would be considered a toil, is to them a pleasure.

'Sir John Fagg has a great partiality to cattle of a moderate size, deeming horses of about fifteen hands one or two inches more capable of going the pace than others of a larger stamp. I think that he has proved his opinion to be a true one, not only from theory, but from practice; for his team, which now consists of small horses, can do their nine or ten miles an hour, and keep on at the same rate without any appearance of fatigue. Indeed he preserves his cattle in such rare condition that with great difficulty are they to be "sewn up." He drives

mares or geldings just as they may chance to come in his way, and he has the science of putting them together in a proper style. As a naval officer manning his vessel for a voyage would not presume to leave the port till every, even the least, article was provided; so neither would the worthy baronet think of mounting his box till every buckle, every rein, was drawn together in its proper place. Thus it is that he is capable of holding his cattle as it were in his little finger. Thus it is that he astonishes the gaping crowd by his skilful management and easy workmanship. No one can pronounce that person a "good whip" who has only been seen jarveying along a turnpike level road. It is in a crowd where the point is to be fairly decided; and certainly anyone who has had the opportunity of seeing Sir John in this predicament must be assured of the fact that he is no mean adept in the art. The worthy baronet, when on the box, is the entire cut of a coachman: he sits erect, and appears conscious of the power he possesses over his team. In the style of his tackle he follows the system of stage-coach proprietors—chain pole pieces, rattling bars with a low plain pole, is the order of the day. His method, indeed, of coupling his horses is a plain proof that he well knows what is "the thing." There is a right way and a wrong in every situation of life, and it appears to be his sole ambition to jarvey on in the right road. This admirer of "the road" is often to be seen on "the bench," and appears to make his cattle work for what they consume. That this principle

of his is good appears from the well-known fact, viz., that the brightness of his harness is never defaced by soap-lather, although they may have trotted by fourteen or fifteen mile-stones at no slow pace. The baronet's own coachman may also be considered by no means an unskilful artist, but he is seldom to be seen on the box, as Sir John is one of the "right sort," regarding neither wind nor weather. He, therefore, never allows his coachman to drive him, but always takes the ribands in hand, whether wet or dry. Thus it is that he knows the different qualities of his cattle, and which is the proper situation for each.

'The present age, I lament to say, is much too refined. By many persons the gentleman who takes a delight in the style of his team and in "the rattling of the bars," is considered a rough unaccomplished clown. But greatly indeed are they mistaken, for no doubt the character of the coachman and the polite gentleman may be blended. Is it not far better for the English gentleman to be living at his private domain (which will be the case with him who takes pleasure in the science of the whip), and spending his income in his own neighbourhood to the benefit and comfort of the poor of his parish, than to be sauntering in Hyde Park, or wasting his estate within the walls of a gaming house? Most certainly it is. What a happiness it would be for the country at large if noblemen of the present age would but be of my opinion! But, Mr. Editor, times are changed. I can only say I lament the misfortune, and

wishing long health and happiness to Sir John Fagg and his friends, remain yours sincerely,

‘AN AMATEUR.

‘Canterbury, September 25, 1826.’

‘Amateur’s’ laments over the low estimation in which the aspirant to the box is held, show the feelings of those days towards the road as a pastime. How just are his reflections on the duties of landed proprietors! Would that the fly-away rush-up-to-town squire of the present day would take to heart the example of this Kentish baronet, and have his hair cut (the popular excuse for going up to London), or do his hunting in his own county, instead of rushing off to London or Leicestershire, because forsooth ‘everybody else does.’ Perhaps, if he did so, we should hear less of strikes of labourers and others, which are now unhappily so prevalent.

What a heart for driving must Mr. Sackville Gwynne have had, who died in 1874. We read of him in the Liverpool papers as ‘a remarkable character who had for some years been well known in the town.’ Mr. Gwynne was the son of Colonel Gwynne, and was connected with an old family who hold estates in Carmarthenshire. Some time ago, however, he had some differences with his family, and, in order to avoid worry and harassment, he voluntarily exiled himself. For a long time he drove the Brighton ‘Age,’ which he horsed himself in grand style with greys. Later in life he

became a cabdriver in Liverpool. In this occupation he was much liked by his brother whips, and was respectful but distant to strangers who employed him in his professional capacity, although cheerful and pleasant with friends who saw him at home. He died at the age of seventy-three, and almost up to the day of his death he mounted the box with the greatest regularity, undeterred by a painful internal complaint; nor was his mental vigour less remarkable than his bodily activity.

The horses attached to the Birmingham Mail (*viâ* Banbury), on December 26, 1836, ran into a drift of snow about two miles from Aylesbury, on the London side. The off leader fell, and got under the pole. The off leader's rein, two traces, and a splinter bar were broken. After setting all right they made another effort to get on, but it was of no use, as the snow got deeper the further they went. The drift in some places was full a mile long. It was blowing a perfect hurricane with a fall of small snow, and the horses shook with extreme cold. They were therefore taken off, and the guard, W. Price, brought the bags to London on horseback. He rode one horse himself, and had a led horse carrying the London bags. Two other horses, with the bye-bags, were ridden the latter part of the way by post-boys. They were constantly deviating from the road, and nothing but a general knowledge of localities, with good nerve, enabled Price to accomplish the journey. On reaching London he was in a most distressing state of



exhaustion. Hedges, gates, and ditches had in many instances been cleared.

The coach was eventually dug out, and was drawn, with its five passengers into Aylesbury by a team of waggon-horses.

CHAPTER XXV.

ODE TO DRAGSMEN.

THE following verses, which appeared in the 'Sporting Magazine,' show that champions such as 'H.' were wanted to support and defend the honours of the bench. 'H.' thus introduces his 'Ode' to the editor :—

'Dear Mr. Editor, for you are dear to me, inasmuch as you have afforded me amusement for many a lazy hour, more especially when coaching has occupied your pages, what think you of an olympiad thereon ?

When Greece was free she loved to hear
The bold, triumphant steeds career,
When Pindar deemed his memory dear
Who rode the rapid car.

Olympic Muse ! is this decreed ?
Shall none accord his nobler meed
Who link'd the generous leaders' speed
Before the splinter bar ?

For sure the coachman-hands are few
That wield in style the polished yew,
And onwards, as their horses press,
Restrain their courage, motionless !
The awkward turn, the steepy hill,
Ne'er foil their systematic skill.

On them the wintry tempests beat,
And summers pour their fevering heat ;
And yet, as rolls the year away,
They drive their hundred miles a day !

Then why shall busy Blame intrench
On life's delightful things ?
There are who deem the coachman's bench
More pleasant than the king's.

And I maintain (whoso'er it shocks),
The jovial comrade on the box
Is jovial at the board.
List any then the truth to try ?
Beside their bright mahogany,
The deed the proof afford.

Yet some there be (I pity much
The land that ever nurtures such)
Gentility parading,
Who from the ribbons and the whip,
Would every lingering honour strip
And call our art degrading.

Accomplished Nimrod ! Clever Peer,
And Taylor (gentle styled),
What dronish hypocrites are here !
By whom are ye reviled ?
By those cold hearts that never knew
The sparkling, creaming spirits' dew,
When o'er our bumper of champagne
We ride the fox-hunt o'er again,
Whose idleness—that intellectual scab—
Anoints itself with reading ;
Their only vehicle a hackney cab,
Their only pleasure—feeding.

May tandems crush their monkey brood,
Who spurn the dragsman's skill !
May guards and porters all be rude,
And if they travel still,
Be every lean machiner screw'd
To multiply their ill !

Where most they wish their journey o'er,
May they be stopped at every pot-house door ;
Wherever business bids them go,
May all the coaches travel slow !
And may they journey in their niggard age,
Where guards and coachmen come to *kick* at every stage.

H.

‘ Brighton, September 2, 1827. ’

CHAPTER XXVI.

MEMORIES AND REGRETS.

‘MANY are there who talk of the delights of travelling in the coaching days of old. They like to recall to mind the memories of the pleasant summer days they spent on the box-seat, chatting with the burly coachman, who, well protected against the possibilities of the weather by innumerable coats, knew every man and every horse he met, and could tell all the news of the country round.

‘They describe in glowing terms the manner in which the mail was taken each morning or evening in the year to the authorised inspector, who examined every inch from the pole to the hind boot, and who critically probed and tested the wheels, axles, linch-pins, springs and glasses : how scrupulously every part was cleaned, and how every horse was groomed with as much precision as if he belonged to the stud of a nobleman. We join in their enthusiasm, and admit that there is much reason for it, when the scenes thus delineated are connected with many pleasing associations. “All the world is a stage-coach : it has its insides and its outsides, and coachmen in their time see much fun.” (Old Play.) Think of the hundred little incidents by the road, the

wayside changes, the hospitable inn and the fire-side gossipings at nights ; all this makes travelling down the road enjoyable in a way which many present travellers cannot understand.

‘ At eight o’clock P.M. the mail-coach was in all the “pride and panoply” of authority, with its mettled steeds “on parade” at St. Martin’s-le-Grand, waiting to receive its bags. Or perhaps it was one of those special occasions in which all ordinary circumstances were surpassed. The tidings of a victory had been received, a national foe had been defeated, and the mail was about to convey the intelligence to a thousand homes. Instead of the news being quietly spread over the length and breadth of the land in a few seconds, as in our own day, resort was had to more ordinary means. Horses, men, and carriages were accordingly dressed in laurels and flowers and ribbons. Coachmen and guards displayed themselves to the best advantage with royal livery around their rotund forms. Passengers merged the reserve of their individuality in a stronger feeling of national exultation, and when the loud noise of the lids locked down on the mail bags smote on the ear, the trampling of fiery steeds was heard as they bounded off like leopards amidst the thundering of wheels and the boisterous shouts of the assembled hosts of observers. In the vivid remembrance of such scenes, it is scarcely surprising that we should regret that they have passed away ; that tidings must now be transmitted by steam or electric telegraph, and that the voice of the trumpet that once announced from

afar the approach of the laurelled mails, should be lost amid the hissing or shrieks of the locomotive.'

The following lines were written by one who saw, with deep regret, the glories of the road departing :—

LAMENTATION OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE WHIP.

Ah ! the good days of coaching are past like a dream,
 And we, the 'Crack Dragsmen,' are victims to steam ;
 There are many good fellows have cause to bewail
 The old line of Road, and the new line of Rail.
 And will England allow the best whips of her land
 To come down from the box without lending a hand ?
 And won't our good Queen do a something for us ?
 Or must we be doomed to a Company's 'bus ?
 O Steam ! thou art nought but the waggoners' curse !
 Now hear all the changes, can any be worse ?
 For the tapering 'crop' you now witness a poker,
 For the spruce turned-out coachman a smutty-faced stoker.
 For the drag and its team, so renowned for its mettle,
 Some menagerie vans urged along by a kettle ;
 For the boast of our country, the 'quicksilver trot,'
 A huge engine and tender, the asthmatical pot !
 For the neat road-side inn and a dish of cold meat
 You've a gorgeous saloon, but there's no time to eat ;
 For a friendly pull-up and a breathing-time chat
 A glance at the down with the loss of your hat ;
 For the 'three feet of tin' there's a whistle so shrill,
 And a killing outright for an innocent spill ;
 Then cry shame on the Rail, and as long as we live
 The inventors of Steam we can scarcely forgive.
 Oh ! our coaches, our whips, when again shall we see 'em ?
 Alas ! as antiques in the British Museum.
 O Vulcans ! O Drivers ! with Tartarean faces,
 Can you ever expect to win 'our' good graces ?

An emblem of Hell are your factory stations,
Exciting our pity, or vile execrations.
Where are your lines that can boast of their bounties?
Can Northern? or Western? can poor 'Eastern Counties'?
O rulers! O people! why are you cajoled?
They'll upset old England, which has long been foretold.

The foreboding about our coaches being seen as 'antiques' was very nearly fulfilled in 1873 or 1874, when the want of space alone prevented the Duke of Beaufort from exhibiting in the Kensington Exhibition, an old Benjamin Worthy Horne's mail in his possession, which used to run on the Holyhead road. But still, to soothe the lamentations of the 'Knights of the Whip,' we can say—

Let steam do her worst, there are swells on the road,
Whose slap-up four-in-hands she can never explode.

And is it not better to travel by a coach at the rate of ten miles an hour, with a certainty of accomplishing your journey by a given time, than to travel by any mode which holds out an uncertain prospect at treble the speed?

'New modes of travelling,' as De Quincey says, when speaking of the English mail-coaches, 'cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power.'

The art of driving and all things in connection with the road had reached perfection—and it is for this reason that we always refer to this period for instructions and information teaching us how to blend the *utile* with the *dulce*—when it received its death-blow by the general introduction of railroads. Still coaching did not surrender; and we see now, in the increase year by year of the number of stage-coaches and of coach and road clubs, a growing

feeling in favour of glorious roads, whether for pleasure or for profit.

‘The superiority of road conveyance,’ says ‘Phoenix,’ writing to the ‘Sporting Magazine’ in 1838, of the pleasures of railroad travelling, ‘as far as enjoyment is concerned, will always be acknowledged; for even in a “case” in a coach, it’s “there you are;” whereas in a railway carriage it’s “where are you?”’

A railway conveyance is a locomotive prison. At a certain period you are compelled to place your person and property in the custody of a set of men exceedingly independent, and who have little regard for your accommodation. Till your journey is accomplished, you are completely subservient to their commands. You pass through the country without much opportunity of contemplating its beauties; you are subjected to the monotonous clatter of its machinery, and every now and then to the unpleasant grating sensation of the brake applied to the wheels. To all these things must be added the horribly offensive smells of rancid oil and smoky coal, the constant attendants upon steam machinery.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON ACCIDENTS.

WHEN the history of railway-travelling comes to be written, one of the longest chapters, and one of the saddest too, will be the chapter 'Of Accidents.' The newspapers have long made us familiar with the heading — 'Railway Accidents.' But accidents happened also in the good old times of stage coaching; and, when we indulge in dreamy regrets over the vanished poetry of the road, it is well that we should call to mind that accidents used to happen even to the best regulated coaches, with the finest teams, and the most accomplished whips. In the course of a year, they were frequently numerous enough to furnish forth a pretty long story. A goodly number of these coaching mischances befel in driving downhill; and a good deal of discussion took place as to the merits of various methods of prevention, especially of the locking of wheels, and of having the harness constructed with breeching.

Nimrod, as will be seen from his Essays, was in favour of breeching, on the ground of its saving horses' legs; and so was 'Jehu,' whose words on the subject are worth quoting :—

‘The next material point,’ he says, ‘to be considered, is the mode of harnessing the horses and attaching them to the carriage. It was a prudent custom of our ancestors to have the harness constructed with breechings; but our modern whipcord dandies hold them in the greatest contempt, and principally because they do not look natty; thus pitting their ideas of a proper appearance in their “set out” against the lives and limbs of the passengers. Now if these modern Jehus hazarded no other necks but their own, the affair might be left to the decision of their own taste and judgment, without the necessity of interference from any other quarter. But as this is not the case, I conceive that every person who is obliged to trust his carcase to the wisdom and forethought of these worthies, has a right to remonstrate, or at least, to offer his opinion. To think of doing so in person would, however, be a vain attempt. For any passenger who has ever ridden on the box of a stage-coach (except *Coachee* knows him to be a member of the Four-in-Hand Club, or a young Oxonian or Cantab,) must have experienced the contemptuous silence with which any observations he might make on the noble art of driving are generally received; for it is inconceivable with what importance these sapient gentlemen carry themselves in the pursuit of their calling. The danger arising from the want of breechings to the harness, exists principally while the carriage is descending a hill; for without them, the whole power of resistance to the weight of the carriage rests on the wheel horse’s withers, thus pulling him downwards towards the ground, to the great risk of his falling;

a risk greatly increased if the horse happens, as is very often the case, to be groggy and tender in his fore feet ; under which circumstances he has enough to do to support his own weight alone, without the additional impulse of the carriage acting against him. When it is considered that the hames of the collar, to which the pole chain is fixed, are held together at the top by a small strap and buckle only, and that, in the event of the buckle giving way, the hames must fly open, and consequently deprive the wheel horse of any further power of resistance, it needs but little reflection to foresee the peril that would attend such an event ; as all power of stopping the carriage would be taken away, its velocity would be increased, and finally, by its overrunning the horses, the consequences may be easily imagined, without any further comment. Now when the wheel horses are harnessed with breechings, much of this danger may be avoided ; because even if the hames of the collar should fly open, still the breeching would act, and furnish the horse with some power of resistance. It is worthy of remark also, that, in consequence of the pole of a stage-coach issuing quite horizontally from the splinter-bar (and which certainly is necessary, on account of the leaders drawing by it with the swingle-tree bars attached to it), there is a greater danger of its being snapped in the socket (*sic*) when it is pulled upwards at the other end, by the resistance from the horses' withers,¹ than when

¹ During the summer of 1875 an unfortunate accident happened to the Boxhill stage, by the pole snapping in the futchells ; they certainly had no breeching.

it is acted upon more horizontally by the breeching. It must be allowed, however, that the above-mentioned risks are lessened when the lock wheel is locked in going down hill. But at the present day this precaution is seldom or never observed, except the hill be as steep as the roof of a house; the practice of these twelve-miles-an-hour gentlemen being to gallop down one hill that they may have the advantage of momentum of the carriage in ascending another. It is true, that where the roads are deep and heavy, the wheels make so deep an impression as to decrease the velocity in descending a hill sufficiently to prevent the necessity of locking, but the present state of the roads is almost universally so sound and good as to keep the wheels upon the nail, and thus the danger is evidently increased. It is no uncommon circumstance, though a very reprehensible one, to use harness (in the middle stages of the road at night) that is so old and imperfect (especially the reins), as to be in constant danger of being broken. This unpardonable practice arises from there being no probability of its being detected by the passengers in the dark; and hence the proprietor, paying more attention to his own pocket than to the safety of the passengers, cares very little about the condition of those articles, which form so essential a part of the undertaking. In addition to this evil, it often happens, that these midway proprietors make no scruple of using a horse in the middle of the night that has never been in harness before, at the risk of his kicking, or jibbing, or running the coach out of the road; inconveniences which, it is manifest, must

be greatly aggravated in a dark or foggy night. When a horse of this description is put into the traces, he is always put in at the wheel that in case of his hanging back, the other horses may drag him on. Now although it is possible that he may go along pretty orderly on the level road, yet when he comes to descend the hill and feels the weight of the carriage pressing against him, he is almost sure to swerve, or to throw himself down on his hind quarters, the consequences of which, if the wheel is not locked, may sometimes be very fatal.'

Nimrod used to blame coachmen for getting too near the pitch of a hill before pulling up 'to drag.' On this subject, an 'Old Subscriber' of the 'Sporting Magazine,' relates the following occurrence :—

'Some few years past I was travelling to Brighton, I think by the "Alert," at the time driven by a coachman named Pattenden. On pulling up at the extreme point of Reigate Hill, and being anxious to get the drag on, he did not do it securely. On starting rather brisk, whether it came in contact with a stone, or from what cause I know not, but it flew from the wheel it was placed on to the opposite one, and fixed as properly and securely as if placed by hand; in which manner we proceeded down the hill, in my opinion, a providential and singular circumstance, which perhaps, prevented a serious accident.'

The difference between the ordinary break block in use on most of the present stage-coaches, and that used by the proprietor of the Ross and Chepstow stage, the "Old Times," illustrated by the accompanying diagram,

cannot fail to attract the attention of coach proprietors in general.

'My stage-coach, the "Old Times,"' says the proprietor, 'is built by Whycherley and Sons of Cheltenham. The outline given of the box seat of the same (fig. 1) shows the position of the break handle. The reason

Fig. 1.

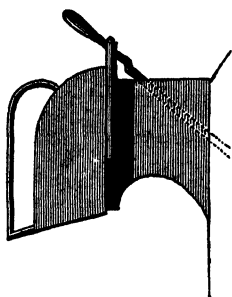


Fig. 2.

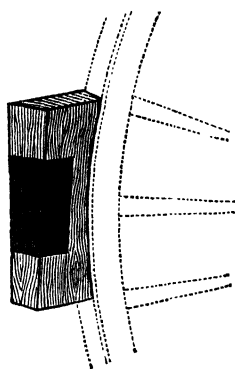
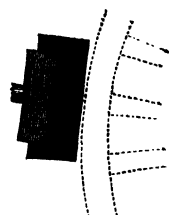


Fig. 3.



why my handle comes so far forward, is to allow for a large block, and to let it come away from the wheel ; so that in going up a steep hill, when your weight is thrown back, and your coach will be down on the hind bed, it does not catch the wheel. This peculiar-shaped block

will all but lock both hind wheels down hill with a heavy load. My block (fig. 2) is of soft *wood*, from twelve to fourteen inches deep, and fits to the wheel with the ordinary break supplied by all London coachbuilders. The small iron block touches your wheel only at one point (fig. 3), and being of iron, also does not bite; their unserviceableness being evident from the fact that, going down an ordinary hill, the *skid* has to be used as well. Observe that the wooden blocks are twice as deep as the iron ones, and, as they wear out soon on steep roads, are easily replaced by knocking the old ones up from the bolt and sliding in another from above, when it fixes itself wedge-like. A great advantage connected with this break is, that the coachman can work it himself easily, as the handle comes forward (for the reasons I have given), and when your wheels are locked is not behind him, but on a line with the centre of the box-seat; thus allowing him to work it without disturbing his seat. Here is a great advantage over the ordinary break, all coachmen will allow; chains with shoe, and hook, and poles too, will break, and this style of block is the only one that will stop your coach. These blocks will last some time, even on hilly roads, in comparison with the small iron ones, as they cover such a large surface. The iron ones require to be "put on" very strongly down an *ordinary* hill and wear away accordingly. You should be careful that your connecting bar be proportionably stout to the size of your break block.'

Nimrod suggested a very simple and practicable expedient for the prevention of accidents to coaches when

descending hills. It was a matter of surprise to Nimrod, as it is to me, that surveyors of roads have not adopted his plan, on the suggestion of coachmen who, says Nimrod, know the value of *the bite*. It is merely this: 'If a strip of gravel or broken stone, about one yard wide and four or five inches deep, was left on the near side of a hill, and *never suffered to bind or diminish*, it would afford that additional friction (technically called *a bite*) to the two near side wheels, that not only would the necessity of a drag chain (never to be trusted) be done away with, but in case of a hame-strap or pole-chain giving way, one wheel-horse would be able to hold back a coach however heavily laden. No inconvenience to the road could arise from this precaution as carriages *ascending* the hills would never be required to touch the loose gravel, it not being on their side the road.' *Custom* is the only excuse I can find given for not adopting this excellent suggestion.

The charge of the roads in the time of the Romans was, Pliny informs us, 'entrusted to men of the highest dignity.' Their roads, some of which remain to the present day, evince their skill and labour in this direction.

The following remarkable instance of a narrow escape from accident is on record as recently as January 1873:—

'On Wednesday night, when the "Queen" coach from Okehampton to Holsworthy was within five miles of the latter place, the coachman got down at an inn and the horses started off, and ran thence to Holsworthy in perfect safety, though the road is exceedingly dangerous

and they had no one to guide them. They stopped for the drag as usual at the top and bottom of the hills, and drew up at the accustomed inn in the usual manner. There were no outside passengers, but a woman and child were inside, and were not in the least injured.'

On Tuesday, December 27, 1836, about a mile from St. Albans, on the London side, a chariot without horses was seen by Burdett, the guard of the Liverpool mail, at the moment that his coach had got into a drift and almost at the same spot. The chariot was very nearly buried in the snow. There were two ladies inside, who made an earnest appeal for help to the mail guard. They stated that the post-boy had left them for St. Albans to get fresh cattle and had been gone two hours. The guard's own situation was critical, for his coachman, a passenger, and four horses, had to be put on their legs again, and he was unable to render any assistance. His mail being extricated, he therefore pursued his journey to London, leaving the chariot and the ladies to their fate.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CHAPTER OF ANECDOTES.

A SHORT time after the last war with France, an amateur coachman was entering the town of Dover at night with his team—all bang-up, and the lamps lit—when, not taking quite room enough, in turning round a corner, he touched the post with his off hind wheel, by which means a little French count, who was on the box with him was sent flying into the street. Falling on his snuff box, which was in his side pocket, he stove in three of his ribs. The amateur pulled up immediately, and seeing a sailor close to his coach, he requested he would go and pick the gentleman up, and see if he was hurt. Jack, who was half sprung at the time, went in pursuit of him, and seeing a bundle of capes and great coats lying in the road, cried out, ‘Why, here’s no gemman here, here’s nothing but coats.’ Upon which the count exclaimed, ‘Oh, by gar, I brake three rib.’ ‘Oh! d——n your eyes,’ says Jack, ‘you’re a Frenchman, are you? lie there and be d——d.’

Nimrod, in one of his essays, expresses a doubt whether it is a coachmanlike practice to speak to your horses from the box. This reminds me of a capital story once told me by my dear friend, Jack Peyton

of the 7th Dragoon Guards, himself an excellent dragsman, relative to that well-known sportsman, novelist, and poet, Major Whyte Melville, a martyr to the noble science. The Major found himself one day without a horse to ride, and the hounds were about to meet at a fixture well known as a sure find. Turning the stable affairs over in his mind, he suddenly bethought himself of one of Mrs. Whyte Melville's carriage horses, as a horse that he remembered being told, on buying him some years before, 'had been hunted.' He made up his mind at once, telling Mrs. Whyte Melville of his intention, adding, 'you can see as much of the hounds with shafts as with pole.' The day arrived and the Major appeared on the 'off horse's' partner. A fox was soon afoot and the Major's heart was charmed on discovering the ease with which the 'coach 'oss' negotiated his first and second fences, allowing him to put himself in his accustomed place alongside of the pack. A burning scent and on they go, another fence or two, not quite so happy, a bit of a 'peck,' occasioned no doubt by the absence of the collar; when in the distance ~~the~~ to a man who is not quite sure of his mount—ominous line of willow trees, indicating water, is seen. Giving up all hopes of further progress, the Major lets go the machiner's head; but as suddenly pulls himself and his steed together again, for through his mind flashes this happy thought (a true case of 'welcome little stranger')—'Machiner' was one of a pair that were in the habit of taking Mrs. Whyte Melville to the Opera House. Moreover 'Machiner' was a highly nervous animal, and the Major had observed that on

coming away from the Opera, on the shutting of the door with the word (bawled out at the top of the voice as usual) 'Home!' this horse invariably rushed into his collar with a tremendous bound; and this was the Major's idea: 'I'll shout "*Home!*" and get the bound!' Acting up to this resolve, and keeping old 'Machiner's' head straight, the moment he felt sure a swerve was coming at the brink of the water, giving the coach horse one cut on his flanks as a reminder, he shouted with all his might, '*Home!*'—when a bound was the result, causing the major and 'Machiner' to land several feet on the far side of the obstacle.

Moral: Do not neglect to make use of your voice to your horse when necessary, for it has its 'effect.'

Fifty years ago many stage-coaches carried six inside instead of four, but it would appear that the increase was only in the number of passengers, and not in the room provided for them. If this was a 'minor inconvenience,' what should we now pronounce the greater to be! 'Of the coaches at that time,' Jehu says, 'I shall say but little of several minor inconveniencies, such as cramming six individual masses of human flesh into a space barely sufficient to contain four; because that point is generally disposed of by the coachman, who very mathematically observes that the motion of the vehicle will make them *settle and dove-tail* as they go along!' It was not long though before the old crawling, creaking, rattling, six-inside vehicle gave way to the fast four-inside light coach.

Here is a story of a traveller by a night mail who was blessed with a greater length of leg than most men.

One of these favourites of nature, who measured about six feet four inches, and who had been travelling all night in the inside of a mail coach, to the no small annoyance of his opposite fellow-traveller, observed, on the coach stopping to change horses, that he would take that opportunity to get out and stretch his legs; upon which the other, who was an Irishman, exclaimed with great feeling and justice, 'By Jasus, you have no occasion to do that, for they are quite long enough already.''

The following is a curious illustration of the decline of post chaises :—

Travelling on the Great North Road lately, I asked the owner of a house which had been a well-known inn but is now a school, if he knew what had become of the numerous post-chaises that formerly rattled over this road. He said that there had been one in the yard until lately, and that he had given it to a carpenter in exchange for forms for his schoolboys to sit on. I have seen a number of these 'yellow po'-chays' in a carpenter's yard at Cambridge, awaiting their turn to give up their panels and spokes to be made into some other device of man's ingenuity. I have also seen them serving as summer-houses in the gardens attached to neat suburban villas.

'To the dragsman of old the present coaches (the drags of the Four-in-Hand and Coaching Clubs) have a somewhat topheavy look, and are all decidedly higher than were the crack post coaches of bygone days. Such vehicles, for instance, as the "Age," the "Rival," or the day mail of the old Brighton Road. Fashion, however,

is imperative, and in such matters a lofty drag, if not quite so safe at a sharp turn, has a very grand and imposing appearance, and noble owners of such carriages deserve to be looked up to.'

Asking the well-known Mr. Barton of Canterbury, who has 'taken off his bars,' after having been a mail coachman on the Birmingham and afterwards on the Dover Road, and who in his last years practised as a veterinary surgeon, if he used not to find it precious cold work sometimes driving between Canterbury and Dover, especially over Barham Downs; he replied that he certainly did at times. He went on to say, 'they used to send me as guards young fellows who had tried shop-keeping or some such in-door work as a profession; anyhow, some of them were regular molly-coddles. I remember driving over these very downs you speak of one cold winter, and my guard was frequently coming over the roof to me, and asking me if I didn't think it very cold. Now I always knew how to keep out cold—(plenty of flannel next your skin, and all that), and this young man did not; and all the answer he ever got from me was—"Cold? oh dear no!" Well, he was continually bothering me about the same thing, until one day—and it really was a tremendously cold day and no mistake, and what is more *I felt it*—he came clambering over the roof and said: "Now, Mr. Barton, this is *real* cold." I said as usual, "Oh no, I don't feel it!" though my eyes were running down with cold at the time; when he replied, "Now, Mr. Barton, I *know* you are cold, for your eyes are watering." "*Watering?*" I said, "why

that's *perspiration!*" I got no more talk from him about the cold after that.'¹

Here is a curious inscription that is to be seen over the door of an inn at Pisa in Italy. It is written in four different languages, but the rhyme and metre are well preserved :—

In questa casa troverâte,
Tout ce qu'on peut souhaiter,
Bonum vinum, pisces, carnes,
Coaches, chaises, horses, harness.

The ordinary mode, be it known, of saluting between coachmen on the box, and when meeting on the road, is by lifting the butt of your whip, and turning the elbow outwards, the little finger being raised at the same time, your forefinger being at all times up the yew, to direct your points.

In drinking toasts, too, amongst 'workmen,' the little finger is always extended when raising the glass.

A gentleman-coachman, a well-known whip—now, alas, no more—who was a member of the Road Club, wrote to me of the present stage-coaches as follows :—
'Most of the coaches of the present day are constructed to carry twelve passengers outside, and four inside, which, with coachman and guard, makes up eighteen persons. Some of the coaches are light, and carry

¹ A letter I wrote to Mr. Barton, enclosing him some copies which I had promised him of the 'Lamentation of the Knights of the Whip,' has just been returned to me through the Dead Letter Office, informing me of his decease. Poor Barton ! I asked him once to get up and let me see him handle the ribbons on our drag at Canterbury. He replied that he wished he could, but was too heavy. I said we'd get him up, when he replied, but how was he to get down !, He was twenty-four stone.

eleven outside, besides the coachman. I do not know the wording of the Act, but I do not think any coach should carry more than eighteen, and I think you could be pulled for exceeding that number. I have constantly left people behind at the "Cellar" and down the road, because I decline to carry passengers on the roof, *i.e.* more than fourteen outside. I do not think it is fair upon your other passengers, your cattle, or your coach springs.' He inveighed (as all thorough-going coachmen ever will inveigh) most strongly against the practice, which some proprietors still adopt, I am sorry to see, of carrying a seat on the roof, than which nothing looks more unsightly or is more uncoaching. Besides, when your boots are full, where is your luggage to go? Let me observe here, too, that the true character of the stage coach is lost in placing the hind seat on irons, drag fashion, instead of on panel. The hind panel should be there (*vide* plate of stage coach), and it should carry the name on it. There is something in such names as the 'Age,' 'Telegraph,' 'Quicksilver,' 'Highflyer,' 'Express,' 'Tally-ho,' etc.—deny it who can. I am glad to learn that the sporting proprietor of the 'Old Times,' the Ross and Chepstow stage, Mr. Price Hamilton, intends having his coaches' hind seat thus, displaying the name.

'Some amusing incidents,' he continues, 'occur, from aristocratic owners being taken for coachmen who live by their trade. An old lady once called to the window a friend of mine, and, showing him half-a-crown, said, "I intend to give you this at the end of the journey, but it must be upon one condition, which is, that I do not see

you enter another public-house, as I think you have already been into enough of them for any refreshment you ought to require." I do not know whether the coachman, whose rent roll of one estate was certainly equal to many half-crowns per hour, afterwards earned the gratuity. I have frequently had to decline tips.¹ But one wet day I took from a distinguished senator, whose party numbered ten outsides, what I took to be a shilling. I thought that, knowing who I was, he offered it for chaff; but when I took off my soaked upper Benjamin soon afterwards, and emptied my pockets, it turned out to be a sovereign.

'An old lady once beckoned me to the door while "first change out" at Balham, and said, "Coachman, we have come very nicely out of London, and at a pretty pace; but through Clapham your horses did not work evenly together. Oh, you see I know all about stage-coach riding!" I was obliged to answer, touching my hat, "You are quite right, ma'am; they did work a little awkward." There was ~~not~~ time, nor indeed would it have done, to try to explain¹ to the dear old party that it was the tramway that was to blame. This tramway is a great nuisance to coaching; it is impossible to get a coach to run evenly over it, particularly where it is laid down on the side of a hill or on asphalte. Your coach sways and slides about, and the sensation of an inside passenger is very much as if the four horses were taking it in turn to draw the coach. This was the old lady's idea, no doubt, for in her last experience of stage coaching,

¹ What a mistake! every little helps.

half a century ago, such an abomination as a tramway for cars was not invented.' He goes on to another anecdote of modern stage-coaching :

' I once heard an American gentleman on the front seat tell his friend on the coach that the Prince of Wales once took up coaching, but suddenly gave it up, and sold off all his harness, one set of which was now in use before us. This beat me for the moment, until he explained by pointing out the coronet on the harness—of course the property of my partner. "The coaches," he says, "are much patronised by Americans, and very good and pleasant patrons and companions they are, too. They make up their minds to enjoy themselves and make the best of everything."

' In reply to my query as to where the "Burford Bridge Hotel" was, he says, "Early last season the old sign-board, with its picture of the 'Hare and Hounds,' the original name of this 'inn,' was taken down, and in its place was put up a plain board, 'The Burford Bridge Hotel.' Hence the change in the newspapers, and my own reference to it. I agree with you in preferring the former name."

The Dorking Coach, hitherto a 'butterfly,' continued on the road throughout the winter of 1873, and ran between the 'White Horse Cellar' and the 'Hare and Hounds,' Burford Bridge, on this side of Dorking. This should prove a useful stage for men hunting in Surrey.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DRIVE ON THE GREAT WESTERN ROAD.

My experience of the Great Western Road, from driving down to Taunton two or three years ago, enables me to speak highly in its favour. The road is kept in excellent order throughout, and the inns¹ are well kept and most comfortable. In all the inns I put up at post-horses are kept. I give them as I found them. The 'Virginia Water' inn, excellent accommodation for man; but as I only changed horses here, cannot say what accommodation they may have for horses. The Hartford Bridge inn we found shut up. At Basingstoke, the 'Red Lion,' capital stables and good in every way. Andover, the 'Star and Garter' inn, all very good indeed; the tits in the stable well looked after. Park House inn, only baited here. Salisbury, the 'White Hart,' excellent. Blandford, the 'Crown,' very good. Woodgate's inn shut up, Mr. Day having taken the inn as part of his extensive stables; though if a feed of oats is all you require, I feel

¹ I use the word 'inn' advisedly; for an inn, according to Johnson's dictionary, is 'a house of entertainment for travellers.' The signification of the term 'hotel,' in its modern acceptation, makes it appear synonymous with inn; whereas the term 'hotel' properly means a genteel lodging-house, such as the Bedford Hotel, Brighton, Hatchett's, London, &c.

sure it would not be denied you. I remember being shown in this inn, some years ago, a three-legged table in a parlour, each leg of which stood in a different county! Mr. Day's racing-stables are in themselves worth going all this way to view. At Sherborne, the 'Digby.' This inn has taken the place of the 'King's Arms,' and no words of mine can sufficiently praise this establishment, for in truth stables and house are in themselves a model of perfection. They were built by the truly sporting and noble-hearted squire of Sherborne Castle, with lavish expenditure without waste. There is a 'place for everything, and everything is in its place.' The principal object of Mr. Digby (I hope he won't mind my making free with his name—public benefactors such as he *must* not mind) in building this hotel was to induce gentlemen to come and hunt in his county. This object he has attained by the good accommodation he offers for the sportsman and his hunter in this venture. I, with my wife, was the first to make use of this hotel, so I take more than ordinary interest in it. The 'Antelope' too is an excellent inn here with good stables. As on my return journey I stayed at this town to hunt, I can speak with some knowledge of the inns. I should like to speak of the 'Leicestershire of the South' as a hunting country, but I must get on the road again and merely say *en passant*, 'try it.' At Ilminster, the 'George,' everything very good; Taunton, the 'Castle,' excellent. For the benefit of those who may wish to travel as we did, I may state how we went. Horses, a pair of brown geldings 15'2, short in leg, light in mouth with plenty of

bone and barrel ; they could do their mile in four minutes easy. The carriage (a Stanhope phaeton with a hood ¹) was hung on telegraph springs, an imperial fitted under the fall of the hood behind, and overhanging the body to the breadth of the front seat, strapped to a d  e on either side under the body, another narrow imperial strapped on to the front dash, and the groom's box fitted under the hind seat. The ' three feet of tin,' a necessity on long journeys, hung at my whip hand in its basket. I never enjoyed anything more than this and other similar travels in my life.

Watching the Kingsbridge stage-coach start, when I was at Plymouth a year or two ago, I noticed a very peculiar hind-boot. Instead of carrying luggage like other stages, it is adapted for carrying passengers, and seats two. It has a barred window at either side, and one in the door behind. Rather a trial for the hind bed, I should say, but necessitated, no doubt, by the fares outnumbering their boxes.

¹ This carriage was too light for road work : the mail-phaeton with perch is the thing.

CHAPTER XXX.

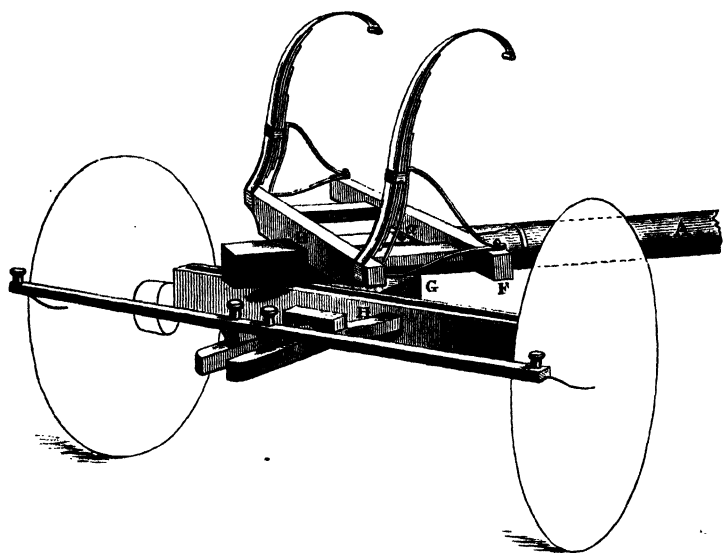
MR. JACOB'S INVENTION.

VARIOUS contrivances have been devised by coach-builders, to enable coaches and other four-wheeled carriages to turn shorter than the common coaches, without causing the forewheels to touch the perch. The crane-necked perch is one; another is the following contrivance of Mr. Jacob, of Greek Street, Soho, (1810).

The diagram on p. 164 represents Mr. Jacob's invention:—

A is the perch as in a common coach. B the piece carrying the springs, and F the piece supporting the traces bolted across the perch at right angles. *a* is the perch bolt which does not pass through the axletree itself, but through a piece of wood, G, projecting perpendicularly from the middle of the axletree, about half the diameter of the fore-wheels, and is firmly fixed to it by bolts and straps of iron. The axletree H, is straight on the upper side, and has a straight edge of iron screwed on the top of it, on which the end of the perch A is supported; the under side of the perch is also faced with iron where it lies upon the axletree.

It is evident, from the drawing, that by removing the perch bolt to a distance from the axletree by means of the piece G, the axletree may be turned round much nearer into a line with the perch, without either of the



wheels touching it, than it could do if the perch bolt went through the middle of it, as in the common way. Still, as this plan has been found to interfere with the straight running of your coach, it does not recommend itself.

CHAPTER XXXI.

REVIVAL OF COACHING.

THE Brighton 'Age,' then the property of Mr. Clarke, was taken off the road in 1862. Its withdrawal marks the beginning of a period of about four years, or three summer seasons, during which coaching, with some casual and obscure exceptions in remote country places, was extinct in 'merrie England.' The rail ruled without a rival. In the summer of 1866, however, an attempt was made by Mr. C. Lawrie, backed by a goodly array of noble and other patrons and shareholders, to restore the glory of the deserted road. Through that season the 'Old Times,' driven by Pratt, made the journey between London and Brighton three times a week, each way. But the sale of the stock, both live and rolling, at the close of the season, was a confession that the scheme did not pay.

Undeterred by want of pecuniary success, several of the proprietors of the 'Old Times,' among them the Duke of Beaufort and Mr. Chandos Pole, made a new venture in 1867. They started and ran, during the season, two coaches between London and Brighton, both sides of the road daily. Pratt was again on the bench,

and his colleague was Alfred Tedder. This double venture appears to have been more successful than the former; and this led to the running of one of the coaches through the following winter months. The coach ran perseveringly, to be sure, but then Mr. Chandos Pole was the proprietor; still its pluck and its luck were ill-matched, coachman and guard not seldom having it all to themselves,—no passengers, no boxes, no tips. This was making it a rather expensive luxury. When the spring came (1868), two coaches again started, and for some time one of them was driven by the proprietor himself, Mr. Chandos Pole, who was familiarly known as ‘the Squire.’ Tedder drove the other coach. At the close of the season an appropriate and no doubt well-merited testimonial was presented to each of the two whips.

The season of 1869 was to witness a far greater and altogether surprising success. This year, the proprietors of the Brighton coach—Lord Londesborough, Colonel Clitheroe, Mr. Chandos Pole Gell, and Mr. G. Meek,—had the good fortune to obtain the services of Mr. A. G. Scott as their honorary secretary. This gentleman, going to work with a will and determined to have his way, knowing well that Brighton coaches, like all other good things, must be *known* before they can be enjoyed and appreciated, did ‘give it bold advertisement.’ By his energetic personal activity and unsleeping vigilance he made the Brighton coach a ‘household word’ in the mouths of men at home and abroad. It was everywhere proclaimed and placarded, till it seemed almost as if a

ride on the Brighton was an object of eager ambition to men in all parts of the world. Passengers offered themselves more than the coach could hold ; and the brilliant success of its ' opening day ' was followed by a run of the same, which has not yet found a terminus.

This same year (1869), several other stage-coaches were put upon the road. One for Tunbridge Wells, which had started in 1868 for Sevenoaks ; another for Windsor ; and a third for High Wycombe.¹ The Windsor coach ran for only two seasons ; but the others held their ground more successfully. The history of coaching for the next few years is to a large extent a record of new and unimportant adventures and speedy failures. Coaches were started for Oatlands Park, Virginia Water, Rochford, Hampton Court and Sunbury, and Reigate. The details of these most sporting though unsuccessful schemes are scarcely worth recording. One event, however, stands out amongst and above all others of the period, as a complete success ; namely, the establishment in May 1871 of the London and Dorking coach. For lovers of the picturesque it would hardly be possible to choose a more attractive piece of road of the same length, or a tract of country presenting so much real beauty and variety. The choice of this road was determined by the urgent counsel of Mr. A. G. Scott, who as honorary secretary accepted the management of the project. The proprietors had originally intended to run a stage-coach to Canterbury ; but on Mr. Scott's repre-

¹ Mr. John Eden is the proprietor of this stage, which has run every summer since.

sensation of the hopelessness of that route, they gave it up and agreed to Dorking.

In 1874, a club was instituted in London for the convenience of *lovers of the road*, entitled the 'Road Club.' Under the presidentship of such a thorough 'artist' and lover of the road as the Duke of Beaufort, this club cannot fail to be very fashionable, and I anticipate a great benefit to the road from its existence. Now that stage coaching is revived, there is no reason why this club should not emulate the example of the B. D. C., and continue the Benevolent Whip Club, a source of relief to distressed coachmen, which worked so admirably in its day. The true lover of the road would be glad of the opportunity of giving a lift to 'one of us,' and the club would gain a practical object.

There are a certain number of stage-coaches which may be considered as standard, *i.e.* for the last five to eight years past, they have always run from London during the season (from May 1, until September or October), and over the same roads, at the same times for leaving and returning, and mostly owned by the same proprietors. They are the following :—

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| The Tunbridge Wells . . . | Hastings Road. |
| „ Dorking . . . | Arundel Road. |
| „ High Wycombe . . . | Oxford Road. |
| „ Brighton. | |

Lord Bective, Colonel Hathorne, Mr. Charles Hoare, Sir Henry de Bathe, Lieutenant-Colonel Withington, Lord Macduff, Lord Blandford, Mr. Eden, Lord Aveland,

Mr. Chandos Pole, Mr. Cooper, Colonel Stracey Clitheroe, the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Londesborough, Captain Haworth, have all been or still are proprietors. Generally two partners work a coach during a season. Some of the above (the late Colonel Withington, Lord Bective and Colonel Hathorne, I think), were on the same road, and never missed a season since it first had a coach upon it.

Then there have been other coaches on the road, viz.:—

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| The Reigate | . | . | . | Brighton Road. |
| „ Windsor | . | . | . | by Exeter Road. |
| „ Guildford | . | . | . | Portsmouth Road. |
| „ Westerham | . | . | . | Uckfield Road. |
| „ St. Albans | . | . | . | Holyhead Road. |
| „ Watford | . | . | . | Birmingham Road. |
| „ Aldershot | . | . | . | Southampton Road. |

These have at times been worked by Lord Carrington, Mr. B. I. Angell, Lord Norrys, Colonel Tyrwhitt, Colonel Dickson, Captains Otway and Williams, Major Furnivall, Lord Guildford, and Mr. R. Herbert.

The table at top of next page gives a list of the stage-coaches and their proprietors, in the season of 1874.

All these coaches, except the Brighton, returned to London between 6.30 and 7 P.M.

The Watford, Birmingham Road, and the Boxhill, Arundel Road, arrived in London in the morning, and worked back from Hatchett's in the afternoon.

| Name | Road | From | Hour | Coachman and Proprietor |
|-------------------|--|------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| Tunbridge Wells . | Hastings, | Hatchett's | A.M. 10 | Lord Bective, Col. Hathorne |
| Windsor . . . | Exeter, | " | " | Capt. Otway and Williams |
| Dorking . . . | Arundel, | " | 10.30 | Col. Withington, Lord Blandford |
| Westerham . . | Uckfield, | " | " | Sir H. de Bathe, Major Furnivall |
| Brighton . . . | Brighton, | " | 10.45 | Captain Haworth |
| Guildford . . . | Portsmouth, | " | 11 | Col. Dickson |
| St. Albans . . . | Holyhead, | " | " | Mr. G. Bailey and Mr. Parsons |
| High Wycombe . | Oxford, Green Man and Still, Oxford Street | | " | Mr. Eden |

In 1875, these were the stage-coaches out of London, viz.:—

| Name | Road | Leave | Return | Proprietors | Coachmen |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| The Guildford | Portsmouth | Hatchett's 11 A.M. | 7 P.M. | Major Furnivall Mr. Shoolbred Mr. Luxmore | Thos. Thoroughood Ed. Spencer |
| Dorking . | Arundel . | Hatchett's 10.30 A.M. | 6.45 P.M. | Marquis of Blandford | Clark |
| Tunbridge Wells | Hastings . | Hatchett's 10 A.M. | 7 P.M. | Earl of Bective Col. Chaplin | Selby Fownes, Jun. |
| Beckenham | Uckfield . | Hatchett's 4.30 P.M. | 10.45 A.M. | Major Furnivall Mr. Baker Mr. Hurman | J. Boutall J. Simmons H. Thorogood R. Rear |
| Windsor . | By Exeter Road | 10.45 A.M. | 7 P.M. | Col. Greenhall Capt. Chichester | |
| Box Hill . | Arundel . | 4.15 P.M. | 11.30 A.M. | Capt. Cooper | B. Hubble and Proprietor |
| Virginia Water | Exeter . | 10 A.M. | 6 P.M. | Mr. Kane | E. Fownes |
| St. Albans ¹ | Holyhead . | 11 A.M. | 6.30 P.M. | Mr. Parsons, &c. | Timms |
| Wycombe | Oxford . | Scotch Stores 11 A.M. Hatchett's | 7.30 P.M. | Mr. Eden | G. Eldridge and Proprietor |
| Brighton | by Reigate & Hickstead | " | Alternate Days. | Mr. Freeman | J. Thorogood McIntyre |
| Maidenhead | Bath . . | " | " | Mr. Hobson | J. Tutton |

¹ This stage enjoys the reputation of being the only one that has been running steadily up to the present hour; keeping its time through a most

Stage-coaching is thus on the increase year by year, not only in and out of London, but in the provinces. In fact, the country stages pay better than those from London; for instance, the 'Revivalist,' from Worcester to Ross, running but four days a week, showed a balance credit of 50*l.* for the season of 1875, and many others do better. '*Floreat Rheda quadrigalis.*'

severe winter, with Selby as coachman and Cracknell (son of 'The Tantivy' coachman) as guard.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RETROSPECTIVE.

‘ A BRIGHT morning towards the end of May ; a coach, primrose colour ; a team of two powerful bay wheelers and blood greys at lead, all with plenty in front of the collar, and bone to support them ; the whole turn-out having a *lot of sort* about it, thoroughly *bang-up* in fact. Throw your fastidious eye over the horses, leathers, and coach, and all you can say is *capital* !

‘ With truth also can you say—

‘ Here’s to the shape that is shown on the near side,
Here’s to the blood on the off, Sir ;
Limbs with no check to the freedom of stride,
Wind without whistle or cough, Sir.

‘ A full way bill, “ time up ” from the guard, “ all right ” from coachee to the horsekeepers, the horse-cloths being pulled off at this signal, the traces tightened, as with one move, bringing the swingle bars up with a jerk, pole-chains rattle to each step, and then “ with elbows squared, and with wrists turned down, he sends his tits along.” The “ three feet of tin ” sounds its seven notes musically, and with “ all quality, pride, pomp, and circumstance of

glorious roads," away we go rumbling over the London stones for our first stage out.

'Amongst all the contrasts that are exhibited in ordinary life, few are more striking than what is presented by London at the same hour morning and evening.

'At six in the morning everything is comparatively still. The chimes of the different churches appear to be louder, only because they are more distinctly heard. Covent Garden market-men and basket-women are pouring in with their vegetables, fruits, and flowers. The battered beau is observed steering homewards but half-sobered, and one would think entirely wretched; while the solitary hackney cab is seen here and there passing sleepily along with a cargo of prime youths, anything but half-sober, or a tawdry heap of damsels who have been Cremorning, or routing, or what not. For the benefit of your town gentleman I have just hinted what a morning in London is. The evenings are familiar enough. We are now passing through Highgate Archway, turning our backs upon the dense fog and smoke that hang about St. Paul's, and overshadow the whole city; observing the mansion, the villa, the cottage *ornée*, with their inhabitants in the shape of bankers, merchants, stockbrokers, and all the other brokers, summoned by the tinkling of an outside bell to their rustic breakfast, before they pour into the City to deal in and talk about stocks, rise and fall, hemp, tallow, differences in prices, coffee, sugar, bristles, horsehair, and skins.

'Reaching the wide and open country, the wheels

skim over the well macadamised road, and the horses bursting into a canter at a smart crack of the whip, step along the road as if the load behind them, coach, passengers, game, luggage, and all were but a feather at their heels. They have descended a gentle slope, and enter upon a road as compact and dry as a solid block of marble. Our stage-coach carries animation always with it, and puts the world in motion as it whirls along. The horn sounded at the entrance of a village produces a general bustle. Some hasten forth to meet friends, some with bundles and band-boxes to secure places, and in the hurry of the moment can hardly take leave of the group that accompanies them. In the meantime the guard has a world of small commissions to execute. Sometimes he delivers a hare or a pheasant, sometimes jerks a small parcel or newspaper to the door of the public-house, and sometimes, with knowing leer and words of sly import, hands to some half-blushing, half-laughing housemaid an odd-shaped billet-doux from some rustic admirer. As the coach rattles through the village, everyone runs to the window, and you have glimpses on every side of fresh country faces and blooming giggling girls. At the corners are assembled village idlers and wise men, who take their stations there for the important purpose of seeing company pass out. The largest knot is generally at the blacksmith's, to whom the passing of the coach is an event fruitful of much speculation. The smith with the horse's heel in his lap, pauses as the vehicle whirls by; the cyclops round the anvil suspend their ringing hammers, and suffer the iron to

grow cool, and the sooty spectre in brown paper cap, labouring at the bellows, leans on the handle for a moment, and permits the asthmatic engine to heave a long-drawn sigh, while he glares through the murky smoke and sulphurous gleams of the smithy. Another crack of the whip and on they speed at a smart gallop, the horses tossing their heads and rattling the harness as if in exhilaration at the rapidity of the motion ; while the coachman, holding the whip and reins in one hand, takes off his hat with the other, and resting it on his knees, pulls out his handkerchief and wipes his forehead, partly because he has a habit of doing so, and partly because it is as well to show the passengers how cool he is, and what an easy thing it is to drive four-in-hand when one has had so much practice as he has. Having done this very leisurely (otherwise the effect would be materially impaired), he replaces his handkerchief, pulls on his hat, adjusts his gloves, squares his elbows, cracks the whip, and on they speed more merrily than before.'

PREFACE TO NIMROD'S ESSAYS.

PERHAPS my reader may call it a work of supererogation for me to write a preface to Nimrod's works. I cannot, however, help giving him John Lawrence's words, addressed to the 'Sporting Magazine,' in reference to these Essays on the Road. 'Nimrod has rendered,' says he, 'a service of public importance by his Essays on the Road. It is an original undertaking, executed in true taste, and with a minuteness of professional and practical accuracy which leaves us nothing to desire.'

If the Athenians, the most polished nation of antiquity, deemed it an honour to be considered skilful charioteers, Englishmen should certainly not consider it a disgrace.

But setting aside the shining examples of antiquity, it should be considered that we are a nation of horsemen and dragsmen ; that among us the management of a horse, whether in or out of harness, is of prime consequence, and to none more so than to the upper classes ; that skilful driving is an enviable accomplishment, even for a Prince ; and that it is only to be attained in any high degree by a course of actual practice upon the public road. Mr. Fox used to say that no man could attain to

a high degree of excellence in any undertaking unless he were endowed with a competent share of enthusiasm. The enthusiasm of Nimrod, and the warmth of his hobby-horsical feelings, are apparent in his every sentence.

I shall say no more, but only note the remark made by one after reading the Essays : ' Though I don't know much about driving, I shall feel a greater pleasure than ever in getting alongside the coachman on the stage.'

Nimrod introduces his Essays in the following words, addressed to the editor of the ' Sporting Magazine ' : ' I am not aware of the road ever having been treated by anyone who could do so from a real practical knowledge of it—and it is one that will not admit of theory alone.

' There has always appeared to me to have been a vacuum in the sporting world, and that is, not the opinion of a sportsman who never saw a hound, not the opinion of a coachman who never was through a dozen turnpikes in his life, not the opinion of a judge of horses who never bought one but to ride up Rotten Row, not the opinion of a groom who has only had to get them into condition for such purposes ; but the result of the real practical observations of one who, for twenty years of his life, has driven coach horses, purchased and ridden hunters, and been a close observer of the management and condition of them in the stable.

' How far I may be qualified for this task, time will show. My title to the qualification is *experience*, and that is said to make even a fool wise. I shall, therefore, only add, that for twenty years I have been in the habit

of seeing most of the best hounds in England, have had a great number of valuable hunters pass through my hands (the greater part of which were purchased young), and have not only been a driver of my own horses of all sorts and sizes, but have worked a great deal *on the road* by day and by night, without which nothing on the subject is to be learnt.

‘In the observations which I am going to make, I shall take a hint or two from those who have gone before me. Mr. Beckford gives, as a reason why he did not write on stag hunting, that he did not understand it; and it is told of an ancient but wily Greek, who was asked his opinion on a subject he was not master of, that he excused himself by saying that what *was* to the purpose he *could* not say, and what *was not* to the purpose he *would not* say.’

NIMROD'S ESSAYS.

THE DAWN OF COACHING.

Parva sunt hæc, sed parva ista non contemnenda—Majores nostri, maximam hanc rem fecerunt.

THE first inventors of things are but clumsily handed down to us by the ancients, although Virgil assigns a place in heaven to those who are clever in that way. The art of driving is of very early date, and has most honourable mention made of it. Horace immortalises a good coachman—'*evēhit ad Deos*'; and Cicero gravely asserts that Minerva was the first to drive four-in-hand. To gain a race by coachmanship, he tells us, was next to a triumph, at Rome; and in Sparta it gave a man an honourable post in the army. Homer employs Hector and Nestor as coachmen; and Virgil tells us that when Æneas took Pandarus into his chariot to go against Diomed, he compliments him with the choice either to fight or to drive—thereby implying that the latter was a post of equal honour with the former. Pandarus however, like a good judge, declines 'having them' (as we should say), lest the high mettled steeds, unused to his *finger*, might become unruly, and get them

into danger. That driving was in use previous to riding horses, need not be observed to anyone acquainted with Homer ; for among all his heroes, both Grecians and Trojans, none of them make their appearance on horseback but Ulysses and Diomedes.

Driving more than two horses in a chariot, however, was, I believe, not very usual among the ancients, although we read of Nero driving ten, and unfortunately for his country, not breaking his neck. Homer's chariots, for the most part, had only two horses, coupled together ; that of Achilles had no more ; and Virgil sends a chariot and pair to absent Æneas. Driving four grey horses was held sacred, and not allowed even in a triumph.

Driving appears to have been practised in the earliest ages of our own country. I believe Cæsar found the British chariots formidable, as they were armed with scythes at their axletrees.

We have all read Ossian's magnificent description of the car of Cachullius, and his horses, whose names he has condescended to mention ; and which must recall to our recollection the one Homer gives of the horses of Pallas. His description of a chariot race is supposed to be one of the finest passages in his poem, and is only equalled by a similar effort of the Mantuan bard, which, it has been asserted, no one could read without his soul being as it were, mounted on the box, and whirled along in the race.

Although the coachmanship of the ancients may have little to do with our present method of driving, nevertheless it may be amusing to some of your readers to refer to it in

its earliest stages, it having been the subject of much learned controversy. It appears that the first chariot introduced into the Olympic Hippodrome was drawn by four horses, which in those times made a complete set. The horses were ranged abreast, and the two middle ones *only* harnessed by the yoke. The two out-side horses were fastened to some other part of the chariot by their traces, but in what manner does not appear. They had a peculiar name for these 'out-riggers,' as we should call them. The most curious part of their driving establishment was, that they had chariot races for colts, as well as for full-aged horses, regulating the course accordingly. Though they do not appear to have known anything of the 'weight for age,' yet the *distance* supposed to be run by full-aged horses was about six Grecian miles, and by colts, four; which, as the Grecian mile is said to be about a fifth less than ours, seems reasonable.

The chariot drawn by four colts, was introduced in the 95th olympiad, and that with two in the 129th. We read of a Macedonian lady, who was the first to win with the three-year-olds, as we may conclude they were. We can, however, find nothing by which we can judge of their exact ages; but the τέλειον ἄρμα certainly denotes the chariot drawn by full-aged horses, and the πωλικὸν ἄρμα that drawn by colts. The Stadium, or place where these races were run, must have somewhat resembled Derby race-course—one with two good sides to it, but sharp turns at each end, as is the case with the one I mention. A pillar was erected about the middle of the turn, which was to be passed *as near as possible, without*

touching it, in the same manner as our race-horses go around our posts. It is in allusion to this, that Horace speaks of the 'meta evitata.' In going as near as possible, but avoiding touching these pillars, consisted the excellence of their art of driving; and, as Pindar's Scholiast concludes, (from the epithet applied to the pillar), they turned the corner no less than twelve times in one heat. Everyone who has ridden race horses, knows the feel (not the pleasantest in the world) of whizzing around a post at full speed, in the midst of eight or ten horses. What nerves must it have required to have stood this hustling amidst a dozen chariots? The situation of the man who sat as time-keeper on Lord March's carriage, when it went twenty miles in the hour over Newmarket heath, was comfortable, when compared with that of an Olympic coachman. No wonder then that such high honours were paid to the winner, and that both master and horses were crowned, amid the applauses and congratulations of the people. The spectacle must have been grand. On the day of the race, the chariots, at a certain signal, entered the course, according to order, settled beforehand; but whether they drew up for starting in a line, abreast of each other, or promiscuously, as our race horses do, is a point not settled. The interest excited was prodigious, and the very highest honours were paid to him by whose skill and *courage* the victory was obtained. The value put upon the accomplishment of driving is evident, from the amusing instructions of old Nestor to his son; as also from what Theocritus relates of Hercules, whose father is supposed to have trusted

no one but himself to instruct him in the art of coachmanship, though he left his other exercises to his masters.

To drive the chariot, and with steady skill
To turn, and yet not break the bending wheel,
Amphitryon kindly did instruct his son,
Great in the art ;—for he himself had won
Vast precious prizes on the Argive plains,
And still the chariot which he drove remains
Ne'er hurt in the course, tho' time has broke the falling reins.

I have only one other observation to make, which is that these chariots must have been more like waggons than carriages, and very near to the ground, or they could not have preserved their equilibrium, when going around the pillars at the pace they are represented to have been driven.

ON HARNESSING.

So much for classical and celestial coachmanship. We must now descend to the humble road, where the modern performers are, certainly, unlike any god but one.¹ Socrates was asked what was necessary to make a man a good musician ? His answer was, 'to *become* a good musician.' So it is with a coachman. The sceptre does not make the king ; neither does dressing, nor looking like a coachman, make a coachman. As a celebrated performer² says, 'driving four horses is a pretty

¹ Bacchus.

² Mr. Williams, better known by the name of Chester Billy (more of him hereafter).

art,' and to do it well is not within everyone's capacity. To enable a man to judge of this, he must be a coachman himself ; and, to be a coachman, it is necessary that he have not been merely amusing himself with four of his own highly-fed and well-broke horses—which perhaps his own coachman has been at work with for two hours in the morning, in his break—but he must have served a sort of apprenticeship to it, by day and by night ; with good horses, and with bad ; with blind and lame ; by lamplight, and by no light¹ at all ; on good roads, and on bad ; wet and dry ; drunk and sober ; with rotten tackle, and bolting horses ; jibbers, and millers ;² heavy loads, and weak horses ; high blowers, and queer ones ;³ steep hills, and broken neckings ; broken axletrees, and over-turned coaches.

When a man has had a good deal of experience in these matters (and not before), he may lay claim to the honourable appellation of a coachman. But how often this claim is denied, even to those who most zealously aspire to it, all who are acquainted with the road can certify—for how rarely do we meet with a real 'artist' ! The success of a coachman greatly depends on his education. If, like Phaëton of old, he jumps on the box, a ready-made coachman, he must expect the same fate ; but if he has *taken his degrees*, and his education has been regular, he begins with driving the leaders of a set of horses before an experienced coachman (perhaps his

¹ In a fog, when lamps are useless.

² Kickers.

³ Subject to the meagrim.

father) on a respectable heavy coach. He there learns the rudiments of his business. He is taught to know when a horse is at work, and when he is not ; and he is also taught how to make the best of the road. He sees when his horses are distressed, and is taught how to ease them ; or, if idle, how to keep them to their collar. It is *heavy work* alone that will teach him his business : I never saw a post-boy that ever made a good coachman.

When a boy who intends being a coachman gets too big to ride the leaders, he cannot do better than turn horse-keeper to a well-horsed coach. His time will be fully occupied, and he will learn everything relating to harnessing, and putting horses together, according to their different tempers ; taking notice of the alteration the coachman makes in their coupling reins, which he will profit by, if he have any brains in his head ; and if he have none, he must remain a horse-keeper.

Mr. Beckford enumerates about a dozen qualifications necessary to make a good huntsman. In my humble opinion, there are as many essentials to a good coachman. He should be sober, honest, civil, and good-tempered ; clean in his person, neat with his fingers, patient, humane, wakeful, hardy, strong, active, bold, and cool in danger. Having said this, we are not to expect a coachman at every stage. Carthage produced but one Hannibal !

I believe it is Ovid who tells us, that 'work well begun is half finished ;' and this holds good in nothing more than in driving. If horses are not well harnessed,

they cannot work well, as much of their power is lost ; for as many horses as there are in a coach, so will there be as many tempers, and ways of doing their work. Some will go as straight as an arrow out of a bow, whilst others will hang, and roll about in all directions, which can only be counteracted by putting them together. Horses well harnessed are half driven.

To reduce this to theory is rather a difficult task, as the remedies apply in so many various ways ; for the movements of four horses in harness bear some resemblance to the changes on so many bells—each horse in his respective place producing the variety. No animal is more cunning, and often more trying to the temper, than an old coach-horse, who is become, what is termed, a good judge of his work. He will watch every opportunity of easing himself at the expense of the rest of the team. If a wheeler—when the double thong is applied to him, or if he hears the whistle of it over his partner's back, off he goes, and pretends to be at the top of his speed, by breaking from the trot to a canter ; at the same time hugging, or, as the coachman call it, 'shouldering' the pole, to the great annoyance of his companion. Again, if he hear the point of the thong out of the coachman's hand, he is off his collar in an instant, as he knows he has nothing to fear from the whip. A leader also has it in his power to pursue the same plan ; but the greatest fault to which leaders are subject, is, *not going up to their bits*—consequently, not going straight, but 'hanging off,' as it is termed, to one favourite side. The former failing may arise from want of physical powers ; but the other is

invariably the effect of a bad mouth or uneven temper. Nothing, however is more distressing to a coachman than either of these bad qualities. His attention is always on the rack, for, if left alone the coach would be off the road in an instant. It also prevents his coach running straight, thereby causing his horses to work at angles, and consequently to lose part of their power. When a horse once takes to 'hang' in this way, he never leaves it off; and to prevent his tiring his driver's arm, a check rein is generally had recourse to. It goes from the check of his bit to the ring on the hames of his partner—or, what is better, it should run through this ring and fasten to the buckle of his inside trace. This gives more play to the rein, and prevents the horse's mouth getting dead, which it is apt to do in the other case. It is astonishing what weight some horses will hang on this rein, which their partner must find the benefit of. Some danger, however, is always attached to a side rein, for if you want to turn your off leader suddenly to the off side, and his head is closely confined to the near leader of course your intention is defeated, unless your near leader will turn also; and accidents have often been the consequence.

When I speak of putting horses together, I do not exactly confine myself to the effect of traces and coupling reins—but to putting each horse into that place where his powers will be most effective. Coach horses on the road are not like gentlemen's horses: they are a medley of all sorts and sizes—consequently there may be two strong and two weak horses in the team. If so they should be crossed, so as not to have the strong

horses on one side, and the weak ones on the other ; as, in that case, one side of the coach will want support, and she will not run steady. With respect to whether wheelers or leaders should be the most powerful, there are two opinions amongst the fraternity. It must in great measure depend on the roads—for if hilly, you will want the strength at wheel. On one mechanical principle it is also in favour of the wheeler, his power being more effective through being near to his work. If, however, you should have two large, and two small horses, whose tempers will not admit of your crossing them, I have no hesitation in saying you should put the smaller ones at wheel, and larger ones before the bars, otherwise your leaders, being lower than your wheelers, would be drawing, as ~~it~~ were, downwards, which is quite at variance with the principle of traction ; which, if ever it varies from the straight line, should have the advantage of the up-lifting power. We have most of us seen (if, in our younger days, we have not done it ourselves) a postboy or an ostler in an inn yard, put his back to the splinter-bar of a carriage to move it. He invariably has recourse to the up-lifting power—for he does not draw straight, nor downwards, but heaves up the splinter-bar when he applies his strength to it.

In harnessing horses, we should apply the power where it is most wanting. The traces of coach horses should be as short as possible—they cannot be too near to their work. Those of the wheeler should just admit of his hinder leg clearing the wheel, and those of the leaders not more than sufficient to clear their tails of the

bars. Nothing looks so bad as to see leaders a long way from the end of the pole. Great attention should be paid to the equal length of the traces.¹ With respect to the leaders, it is necessary to *cross* their traces when you have one strong and one weak horse together. The strong horse helps on the weak one, and keeps the draught more level; or, as the coachmen say, 'he helps on the *other side* of the coach,' which is true enough; or, in other words, it prevents angles—the greatest obstruction to draught. Many coachmen *lap* their leaders' traces in wet weather, as it prevents their galling their sides by the friction, which is increased by wet and dirt working up between the trace and the skin. Lapping and crossing traces are two distinct things. In crossing, the inside trace of one horse hooks on to the inside bar of his partner; but, in lapping, it only passes inside the other horse's trace, and returns to his own bar. In the latter case, the lapped trace should be somewhat longer than the other, to enable the horse to work even; for, if he do not work even, a sore shoulder is a certain consequence.

It is most material that the traces of wheel horses should be exactly level, for the reason I have before stated. Some splinter-bars (or wheel-bars, as they are called by others) are not quite straight, but have a little curve inwards at each end. When this is the case, the outside trace of a wheeler should be a hole longer than the inside one. With leaders, this minute exactness is not

¹ The wheelers' inside traces should be one hole shorter than the outside, to enable them to pull straight.—EDITOR.

so essential, as, the bars being loose, the traces will find their own level. If a horse draw at angles, his shoulders will be wrung, as is proved by putting leaders to work with a main bar only, and no swing bars. This can only happen with the mails, as all the other coaches carry a spare swing, as well as main bar. The mail only carries the latter, which has four trace-hooks to it for the four traces of the leaders. It does very well for a short distance, but if horses were to work long at it, over heavy ground, their shoulders would be torn to pieces.

Our leaders' bars are a very pretty contrivance, and act upon true mechanical principles. Some coachmen chain the swing bars by two or three iron links. For night work this is not a bad plan, as, in case of a trace breaking or coming unhooked, the bar keeps its place, and does not strike against the horse's hocks. In the event, however, of a horse kicking over his bar, it is attended with danger, and many have had their legs broken in consequence. By observing the bars, we can always tell which horse does the most work, as the free horse will 'carry the bar,' as we call it—that is, it will be an inch or two before that of his partner. When this is carried too far by the free worker, his trace must be crossed, as I observed before, or his partner will feel the ill effects of it. The idle horse should be put off-side, as he is more come-at-able.

The next thing to attend to about a coach horse, or any other horse that goes in harness, is his collar. Unless a horse work easy in it, we cannot expect the full benefit of his powers. If it be too short for him, he

chokes in it, and drops as though he were shot. When I first knew the road, almost every other harness horse had raw shoulders, and it was distressing to see them. This evil is, in a great measure, removed, and we now seldom see a seasoned coach horse with a broken skin. A great preventive of sore shoulder is, having the collar to fit close to the shoulder. It cannot fit too close, provided it comes well up to the shoulder, and does not, if I may so express myself, *stop at the neck*; for it is from that cause that the mischief arises. When a horse stands at ease in his collar, it is sufficient that the hand can pass between it and the thin, just in the part where it passes over the wind-pipe. The closer it fits in other places, the more effectually it embraces the powers of the horse that wears it. With a high-blower much caution is necessary, and his collar should be stuffed a little fuller at the points of the shoulders, so as to remove the pressure entirely from the wind-pipe. It is not amiss to have his collar open at the pole (the top), and made to buckle, so that it can always be fixed to a nicety in its proper place. The skin of some horses is by nature so tender and irritable, as to be with difficulty preserved entire. Various are the methods to prevent the evil; as also the remedies to cure it. Some prefer having collars lined with cloth, instead of leather; and, where the work is heavy, they are certainly less liable to wring the shoulder, by absorbing the perspiration more readily, in the first place, and, in the next, by admitting of their being eased off the tender place by removing the stuffing at pleasure, and by facing them with flocks just where

they press on the part affected. The cloth facing can likewise be kept soft, by having it well beaten with a stick—whereas leather will get hard by being constantly wet, and nothing can be done with it but to keep it clean—scraping off the sweat and dirt, and every now and then running the oil-brush over it. With *very tender* shoulders, nothing will do but the false collar, which should be the last resource, for it is very unpleasant to a horse in hot weather, as the air cannot get under it. For gentle work, however, with gentlemen's horses, particularly those used to ride and drive, they are useful, as they prevent collar marks, which are very unsightly. Whenever the skin is the least wrinkled under the collar, the hair will invariably come off, although the injury to the skin may be but trifling.

When shoulders of unseasoned horses become raw, time will heal them, although they go on working, without any more assistance than merely keeping them clean—and if you like—washing them with brine made strong enough to swim an egg. Some horse-keepers never take the collars off their horses, giving as a reason that they are always warm and dry when the horses are put to their coach again. Generally speaking, I should not recommend this plan, as we cannot suppose a horse to enjoy himself so much when lying down, which coach horses commonly do at full length, as though his collar were off. In case, however, of a bolting horse, or a gibber, it may be of service, for many horses will start with a warm collar, that would not touch a cold one. The old breast collar is nearly lost sight of. It was never calculated to

give full effect to the powers of a horse in harness, but was convenient for post horses on roads much frequented, as they could be harnessed and brought out much quicker than when collars and hames were to be put on. They are only now to be seen on the leaders of two or three old-fashioned coaches.

The pads of wheel horses also demand attention. They should fit a horse's back like a well-made saddle, and if not well stuffed they are very apt to gall them—there being a great stress upon them when going down a hill, or pulling up short, with a heavy load, particularly when breeching is not used.

The pads of wheelers and leaders should fit well to their backs, and be girthed moderately tight, for nothing looks worse than to see them jumping about when the horse is in action. When it happens that a horse loses his flesh, his pad becomes too wide for him, in which case a false one is put into it, fastened by two small straps made to buckle over it. The middle terret in the wheelers' pad is an improvement of late years; and a considerable one it is, for the leader's rein passing through it *by itself*, runs more glibly than when accompanied by the wheelers' coupling rein, as was the case before. The false belly-band passes under the coach horse from one tug buckle to the other, and is quite slack when the horse stands at ease. Its use is, to keep the traces down when he is at work, and thereby prevent angles in draught.

The next, and perhaps the most material part of putting horses together, consists in the coupling reins;

but, as the fixing of them depends upon so many circumstances, no general rule can be applied. In this, however, consists the '*sine quâ non*' of horses going well and straight in harness, and a judge will soon observe the alteration of a single hole. I once had the pleasure of seeing this effect produced, off-hand. I was going by a coach, the proprietors of which I knew, and was in the act of getting on the box with the reins in my hand, when a celebrated performer from another coach requested I would let the coachman take them, as he was going, by the desire of his master (who was also Johnny-rav's master), to put his team a bit straight for him, as his horses were sinking for want of being better put together. The importance with which these words were uttered, added to the pleasure I was likely to receive, brought me to the ground again, and Johnny started his coach as soon as all was right. 'The artist' looked on, but said nothing till we had proceeded about four miles, when, desiring him to pull up, he got down, and made the necessary alterations. The effect was immediately visible. The horses were brought closer to their work, their heads put into their proper places, and their power applied where it ought to be.

With respect to coupling coach horses, I have always been of opinion that their heads, particularly wheel horses, should not be too closely confined. I admit that it looks well to see them 'well coupled up,' as the song says, with their heads close together, running boldly up to their bits ; but if you confine them too much, they cannot apply all their power to the collar. Wheel horses

should have more liberty in their coupling reins than leaders, not only on account of the pole, but to enable them to quarter the ground if necessary, as also to enable them to put themselves into a proper position to hold back down a hill, which they cannot do if their heads are too much confined. Admitting that some disadvantage may arise from having the leaders' heads too near together, I confess I like to see it. When this is the case, they are so much easier driven. The very turn of the wrist will affect their mouths, and, of course, they are much safer on their feet, for, on the least false step they make, the support of the coupling rein is immediately felt; whereas, but for it, they might be down before assistance reached them from the coachman's hand. In my early days throat-lashing a horse was unknown. To blind horses it is of the greatest service, and it may be truly observed that they could not go with safety the pace they now do without it. Throat-lashing consists in passing each horse's coupling rein through a ring on his own throat-lash, previous to its being buckled to his partner's bit. I have only one other remark to make respecting coupling reins, which is, that as of two reins one must be uppermost at the crossing, one should be buckled to the horse that carries his head highest or is apt to throw his head about, otherwise he will be constantly annoying his partner's mouth. When a coach horse runs in and bores upon his partner, thereby driving him off his ground, a side rein is made use of. It passes from the outside check of his bit through the outside ring of his hames, and fastens to the tug buckle. This will

keep him straight. When a horse carries his head outrageously high, means should be taken to prevent it, as he cannot see his road or work so well. With a wheeler, what is called a bit-martingal is had recourse to. It is fastened to the ring in the throat-hasp of the hames, and branches off to the checks of the bit. With leaders the remedy is a cavison martingal, as there is no ring in their throat-hasp to buckle it to.

The draught-rein is next to be noticed. This may be called the fellow rein to the coupling-rein; though in fact the coupling-rein is attached to it. The length of the draught-rein should be to a nicety, as your power over your horses in a straight pull depends upon it. The billet from it passes outside each horse's neck, through the ring on the hames, to the cheek, or to the bit, as your horse's mouth requires. The buckles of the coupling-reins should be nearly over the buckles of the crupper, or about eight inches from the setting on of the tails. The bearing-rein is a great support to a coach horse, and the proof of it is, that if he fall down, either the bearing-rein or the crupper is certain to break. It is impossible, however, to answer your correspondent's question generally, as to whether a coach horse should be beared up tight or not. This must depend upon his mouth. The use of a bearing-rein is to bring your horse's head into the place where you wish it to be, *so as to pull him together*. To attain this object, as in riding him, no greater force should be used than is necessary. His being beared up tight or not must, therefore, depend on circumstances. If he be a stiff-necked, low-shouldered.

horse, with a dead mouth, he will require his bearing-rein to be very tight, and *vice versâ*. When time will not admit of taking it shorter by the buckle, giving it a twist before putting it on the bearing hook adds to its severity.

To attempt giving directions for curbing coach horses is vain, for that must depend on the state of each horse's mouth and of his temper and disposition. The bits invented within late years, with different loop-holes in them for the billets of the reins to be placed in, are most useful and beneficial, as they admit of your easing or punishing your horse's mouth as may be necessary, and in a manner which cannot be effected by the curb-chain alone. Horses with hard, dead mouths, require the nicest management to render them tolerable to drive; and nothing contributes more to keep their mouths in this state than curbing them up tightly, particularly should it be accompanied by a heavy hand upon them. We all know the effect of a severe curb-chain on a horse, if held tightly for any length of time, when riding him. In a race it's power is greatest, because, the short time in which it is run, does not admit of these ill effects; but he who rides a horse for an hour on the road or over a country, leaning hard on the curb-rein, will soon find his horse's mouth become hard and dead. To ride or drive horses with pleasure, and to advantage, their mouths must be played with and humoured; and no doubt, they themselves equally find the benefit of a light finger. Coachmen sometimes put the curb-chain into the mouth, across the tongue, instead of under the lip, as

it often causes a horse to play with his bit, and renders his mouth lighter. When a coach horse gets a trick of getting the cheek of his bit into his mouth, a round piece of leather should be fastened to it to prevent him; for when he does so, he is dangerous, as no coachman can hold him.

POLING-UP AND BREECHINGS.

The most dangerous horse of any in a coach is, what coachmen call a 'stiff-neck'd one'—that is, one which in going down a hill, instead of inclining his head towards his partner, and throwing out his quarters so as to place himself in a position to hold back the coach, *twists his head the other way*, looking, as it were, over one shoulder, and with the other, what we call 'shouldering the pole,' or pushing it against the other horse. When a horse does this, pulling at him is useless; and nothing will keep the coach in the road but whipping his partner up to him—and if that will not do—crossing the road *quickly* with the leaders, which I shall explain in another place. Numberless have been the accidents which horses of this description have occasioned in hilly countries;—for the best coachman in England is at no certainty with them. I cautioned a coachman against one of them in the — Mail, a short time since, but he persevered with him until he upset his coach, and mischief ensued.

In answer to your correspondent's query respecting pole-piecing,¹ or poling-up, coach-horses, no general rule

¹ We make a verb or two now and then on the road.

can be applied, as so many circumstances must be consulted. For London streets, and for the roads in the neighbourhood of London, horses may be poled-up as tight as you please—and for gentlemen's pair-horse work, the tighter the better, as the stoppages are so frequent and so sudden : but for *general* road work, the case is very different. In the first place, the state of the road must be considered—for if rough and full of chucks,¹ it would shake a horse to pieces to pole him up tight. Also on many roads where Mr. M'Adam has not been at work, there are ruts, and, consequently, *quarters*. In this case, a wheel-horse, must have some length of pole-piece, or he cannot take the quarter, and would be always floundering in the rut. A horse that is tender on his feet must not be poled-up tight, or he will feel the ill effects of it ; neither must those whose shoulders are tender be too much confined in this respect. A blind horse likes to have his pole-piece rather short, as he feels a support in it ; and it is better that he should hang on that than on his coupling-rein. If a horse is clumsy on his legs, a short pole-piece is useful ; as in case of his dropping it will catch him, and help him to save himself. I have seen a horse dragged on his side by his pole-chain for twenty yards in slippery weather, and nothing much the matter.

There is no part of putting horses together in which it is more necessary to attend to *circumstances*, than in their pole-pieces. Some, whose tempers are easily ruffled, will not suffer themselves to be poled-up tight,

¹ A word of our own.

as the confinement is more than they can bear. I have known several that were fidgety, and even dangerous, when first put to their coach, stand very quiet when let out two or three links in their pole-chain ; and some that would never suffer themselves to be poled-up at all, till they had gone a mile or two on the road. There was a remarkable instance of this in a capital little grey mare that ran many years in the Worcester Mail. Her ground was from Worcester to Bengeworth—fifteen miles. At Worcester she would stand poled-up, perfectly quiet, for a quarter of an hour, amidst the rattling of a carriage, drums and fifes, &c. ; but at the other end, it was with difficulty she could be put to the coach at all. When the coachman, guard, and passengers were up, and all was right, she was brought to the coach, with her head towards it—the pole-chain just hooked in the ring of her hames—and the leader's reins run through her terrets—when she was turned quickly around, pushed up to the pole, and with the assistance of three men she was started. One of them reached over the traces of the other wheel-horse to slip one of her's on the roller. Another, on the same side, fixed her coupling-reins ; whilst the third put on her outside trace, and poled her up, *if he could*—but this was a service of danger, and could not always be done until she had gone some distance on the road. To account for this would puzzle a philosopher ; but it may be reasonably conjectured that something had affronted or alarmed her when first put to the coach at Bengeworth, which she had never forgiven or forgotten. She was in the hands of a very good

coachman—poor George Taylor, who died last year, landlord of the 'White Hart' inn at Broadway, now kept by his widow—or accidents must have been occasioned by her vagaries.

Some coachmen pole up their horses very tight because they will have less trouble in driving them ; but generally speaking, they must suffer by it—particularly with heavy loads—for there is always some play in a pole even on good roads, and much more on those that are rough and shaking, which must be distressing to shoulders and forelegs, especially if the pole does not fit well in the futchells. With respect to hilly countries, to which I have been much accustomed, I have always found that the generality of horses hold back their coach better when their pole-pieces are of a moderate length than when too close to their pole-hook—taking care that, when at the full extent of it, their hinder legs clear the fore-wheel. When a horse has no breeching, he requires to be a hole or two nearer to his pole, as, when in the act of holding back, his collar gets more forward than when he has breechings, unless a false martingal be used.

As all mail and stage-coaches, as well as all four-horse coaches belonging to gentlemen dragsmen, have chain pole-pieces which hook, instead of buckling, as was the case with the leather ones, care must be taken that the hook be fixed with the point downwards, otherwise it may fall out, or catch in the bits of the horses. If pole-pieces are too slack, the hook will sometimes shake out ; for which reason coachmen who work by night are apt to

tie up their horses tighter than they would otherwise do, to make safe.

Much attention should be paid to the sound state of the reins ; and as soon as a coachman perceives them begin to wear thin—which they first do in those parts which run through the terrets and the rings of the hames, he should take his knife and cut them directly. His horse-keeper then *must* get them repaired, which, perhaps, as is too often the case, he would otherwise neglect to do. Some of the most dreadful accidents which have happened on the road, have been occasioned by reins breaking, when all command over horses is lost. This, however, can only occur from carelessness, as it is not in the power of any coachman, however strong, to break them from his box, if they are sound and perfect. Indeed I shall, in the course of my remarks on the road, take occasion to show that forty-nine out of fifty of the accidents which we hear of are the consequence of carelessness alone. Pole-pieces to coaches seldom break, being, as I before observed, made of strong chainwork ; but the neckings (straps), which confine the hames at the top of the collar, often give way from the same cause—neglect ; as also do the throat-hasps (iron links) of the hames, to which the rings are attached that the pole chains run through. Particular attention should be paid to these points ; for, where there is no breeching used, the stress on the necking is considerable ; and with breeching, it is equally so on the throat-hasps and rings. In night work accidents often happen from neckings giving way, which sometimes cannot be perceived by

lamplight until a coach comes to push upon the horses going down a hill, and then danger is at hand. The greatest care, therefore, should be taken to see that these straps are sound for horses that work at night.

The only material part of the harness of a coach horse which now remains to be described, is the breechings; and in answer to your correspondent's query as to their utility, I must, in the first instance, inform him that there are two opinions respecting them, on the road, amongst coachmen and proprietors. Many of the former, confident in their own performances, dislike them, as cumbersome to their horses, particularly in hot weather; and say, further, that however useful they may be in holding back when necessary, yet they give them a trick of 'sitting upon them,' as they term it, whenever an opportunity offers, and not getting away from their coach when wanted to do so. Many proprietors object to them, because they prevent coachmen from chaining a wheel down hill which, but for them, they could not go down without, thereby injuring their horses' legs. Mr. Jolly, who horses so many coaches below Oxford, on the Birmingham and Worcester roads, will not suffer a breeching in his stable, for this reason. As proprietors now *mile* all their coaches, the wear and tear of the wheel, by chaining it, is immaterial to them; and indeed, with the exception of the mails, it is equally so to those who supply the coaches, as slippers or skids are now generally made use of, to lock the wheels in. That was a very good contrivance, if it could have been brought to bear, for which a patent was obtained about two years since, to enable

the guard to chain the wheel of a coach, without getting down ; as it not only saved time and trouble, but might have been most serviceable to prevent accidents from a bolting horse, or the coach getting the better of the horses, or the horses getting the better of the coach, which will sometimes be the case. By a very simple contrivance—a jack and two pulleys—the slipper was let down so as to meet the wheel when in motion. It was wound up again into its place by the same means ; but it was, unfortunately, found to be inefficient, as the line would not slide, neither would the pulleys work, when clogged with mud or frozen dirt. It is to be hoped, however, the plan may yet be perfected, as instrumental to the safety of those who travel by coaches.

Proprietors also object to breechings on another score. They know that when a coachman has breechings on his wheelers, he gains the time otherwise taken up in locking and unlocking the wheel down the hills, by going down them without : but then they know that this is not done without risk to the passengers, and consequently to their purses, as the stress on the pole, pole-pieces, neckings, &c., as well as on the reins, is considerable—to say nothing of the wear and tear of their horses' legs. On the other hand, clever and experienced coachmen will tell us, that the danger in this case, *with horse and tackle to be depended upon*, is not so great as that created by locking the wheel, by which, particularly in frosty weather, many coaches are overturned from what is called 'striking,' which a locked wheel always does, more or less, occasioning a considerable swing to a top-heavy load. There is

another objection to a locked wheel. The chain may break when a coach is going fast down a hill, trusting to the security of it ; or if a slipper or skid, the wheel may fly out, by a sudden jerk of the road, which often happens where it is rough and stony. In frosty weather, when the road is glazed as it were, neither slipper nor chain are of much use, and the only way in which a wheel can then be tied to effect, is by a chain, so contrived as to have it go around the *felly* of the wheel, instead of around the spoke, taking care that it pass under the tire, *just where it takes the ground*.—The roughness of the links then stays the wheel, whereas the smooth and polished surface of the skid would cause it to glide over the ice like a skate. A passenger should never put his head out of a coach window on the side on which a wheel is chained, for should the chain break anywhere near the perch, it would be instant death to him.

From what I have said respecting the comparative advantage of locking a wheel, or having breeching to coach horses, it appears that much may be said on both sides. With heavy work, and steep hills, either one or other is necessary ; but upon the whole, I should, on most occasions, prefer breechings, as safer, with top-heavy loads, to the locked wheel, if proper attention be paid to the tackle. Where the hills are very steep, and the loading high, both are at times not more than necessary to insure safety. It is wonderful what a steep hill some horses will take a load down, with breechings on them, if the road be smooth ; but when there are chucks and ruts in it, there is always a chance of the pole snapping.

I was treated last summer with a show-off of what horses could do in this way, when in the hands of 'an artist ;' but the twisting of the pole seemed almost more than the best ash timber could bear, and the prospect was by no means agreeable. It is also surprising to see what a load some horses will hold back *without* breechings ; but this cannot be done without their having a distressing weight on their backs, and consequently, on their fore legs, as all the stress of holding back lies in the tug-straps, which come from the pads to the tugs of the collar. In this case a false martingal is of great use : it passes from the belly band, between the fore legs, to a link of the throat hasp in the hames, and, by that means, prevents the collar from getting *forward on the neck*, when the horse hangs back at his pole-chain. These difficulties, however, are obviated by breechings, which are, certainly, much in favour of horses' legs. When I come to my intended observations on coaches descending hills, I may have something more to say on this subject ; but I shall dismiss it for the present, and proceed to another contested point among our 'prime ministers'—and that is, whether it is better to drive four horses with short or long wheel-reins.

It may be scarcely necessary to remark, that the difference between the short and long wheel-rein is this. With the former, the rein terminates in the coachman's hand ; and with the latter, it runs though it, in the same manner as that of the leaders'. Driving with the long wheel-rein is chiefly confined to London coachmen, and a few swells in the country ; for, taking England through-

out, ninety-nine out of a hundred make use of the short one. Most gentlemen coachmen, of the new school, drive with the long one; and '*Gentleman Taylor*,' on the '*Southampton Telegraph*,' says, 'nothing is so *low* as a short wheel-rein.' Another flashy coachman says, no man should drive a horse for him with short wheel-reins; but all this, under all circumstances, does not settle the point.

I perceive that since the above was forwarded to you, you have been favoured with some remarks *on coaching*, by your correspondent Jehu. As another of your correspondents observes, the subject is a 'new one,' the field is open, and I hope Jehu will give us something new. It does not require an Irishman to say, that a man may not be quite *at home* when he is *on the road*—but I suspect Jehu never 'had hold of them,' when the hames flew open, even with a breeching, or he would have found it of little use. He will find it stated by me, that "When a horse holds back *without* a breeching, the stress lies in the tug-straps, which come from the pad to the tugs of the collar.' Were the '*whole power of resistance to rest on the horse's withers*,' as Jehu states, it would not only pull him down, but the necking would break before the coach had gone twenty yards down a hill. My father was a literary man, and knew nothing of sporting in any way, but whenever he heard me speaking on the subject, and not making use of technical language he invariably corrected me. Jehu speaks of 'the pole issuing from the splinter bar,' and being

‘snapped in the *socket*.’ This is not the first time I have found the word ‘socket’ *figuratively* employed ; but I never found it applied to the futchells of a coach. A little opposition, however, is the life of ‘the road,’ and there is no getting on without it. If, therefore, Jehu finds me *off* the road, I hope he will pull me up ; as I shall not fail to do by him if he continue the subject ; for, as the Vicar of Wakefield’s son found out, on his arrival in Holland, that before he could teach the Dutch English, it was, unfortunately, necessary that he himself should understand Dutch ; so we must neither of us attempt to teach others what we do not know ourselves.

LONG AND SHORT WHEEL-REINS.

Whether it is better to drive four horses with the long or short wheel-rein, must, as I before observed, depend upon circumstances. As for myself, I was taught with the short, by the celebrated Jack Bayley—no mean authority—when he was on the Birmingham ‘Old Prince,’ from Oxford to London, and when, on the Salt Hill Ground, he instructed the Etonians, and brought out some first-class men in his way. Bayley was a first-rate coachman of the old school, and had different tackle to deal with to what is to be found at the present time on that road ; and the man who could now bring the ‘Old Prince’ over that ground with four tons weight about her, at the rate of eight miles an hour, could not

have done it in his time. Jack was a long time on this coach, an honest and faithful servant to his employers ; and, as is the lot of many others, who dole out their instructions to their superiors (without the use of the whip), received a comfortable sinecure for his trouble—the driving club having honoured him with a salary of two hundred per annum for his life, on his retiring from the box, though he did not enjoy it more than two years. When a man, long accustomed to travel sixty miles a day on a coach-box, comes to exchange the clear and bracing air which he meets with on the road, for that of a tap-room, hot rum and water, and tobacco-pipes, surrounded by old acquaintances still at work, the chances are much against him, and nature soon says ‘enough,’ as was the case with him.

Although taught with the short wheel-rein, yet having, in my noviciate, been much in the tandem line, and having, when a young one, driven a unicorn curricule for two years, I was compelled to the use of the long one, so that each has been familiar to me in its turn ; and as far as my experience has led me, each has its advantages. As, however, it is a point a good deal contested on the road, I will state, to the best of my ability, their merits and demerits—leaving your readers to decide for themselves ; only observing, as Sir Roger de Coverley did before me, that ‘much may be said on both sides !’ Were I to be asked to drive Shackell’s Reading coach, the first stage out of London, I should say, ‘Give me the long wheel-rein ;’ and if I were to take hold of ‘three blind ones and a bolter,’ I should prefer the short

one; and in the course of my observations I will tell you why.

I hope I shall not give offence when I say that it is not because London coachmen generally use the long wheel-rein, that it must be the best; for although London, as relates to most other occupations in life, contains the best performers in their way, yet there are more bad, powerless coachmen out of London, in proportion to their number, than are to be found in any other place or country. There are not half the difficulties to call the power and skill into action, on their fine roads, and with their picked cattle that there are in the country; and being able to hold their horses together, and knowing their right hand from their left, is nearly all that half of them have got to do. As to driving in London streets, no coachmanship is required there, as is proved by the raggamuffins—I cannot call them coachmen—who drive, by dozens, the short four-horse coaches in and out of London, every hour in the day. In the streets there are always two coachmen at work, as I avoid you, and you avoid me; and God help the passengers by these coaches, if it were not so. London coachmen know but little of heavy loads and weak horses, or bad roads and steep hills, when skill, judgment, and coachmanship are necessary.

With respect to long wheel-reins, I am ready to admit that when horses go straight and well up to their bits, a coachman has more power over them *generally*, (though not individually), than with the short; and the proof of this will be found in almost every coachman

when he comes to go down a steep hill, drawing the wheel-rein through his hand, in which case he is at that time, certainly, driving with the long one. If he trust to the short one, without pulling it through his hand, he will find that, as the horses in the position of holding back their coach, will be so much nearer to the box than when they are on the collar, the rein, if left resting on the hand, will be almost useless, by reason of his being obliged to draw his hand up to his chin, to obviate the difference of situation in which his horses are placed ; and then he has but little power over them, for that ‘chin-work,’ as we call it, will never do. If he do not draw his hand up in this way, he must divide his reins with his other hand, in which case he loses the use of his whip, which is more often wanting in descending than in ascending a hill, and is frequently the only means of preventing a coach being upset. When, however, a coachman has drawn all his reins through his hands, and got fast hold of them, he has got his horses, as it were, in a vice, and his other hand is at liberty for any emergency that may occur. An advantage also attends long wheel-reins in the event of a wheel-horse falling ; for, if he gets quite down on his side, he cannot pull the coachman from his box, which has happened, and proved fatal, to many who drive with the short one ;—not, by the bye, that I have any idea of a man, awake to his situation, as a coachman, and seated properly and firmly on his box, with his feet out before him, being pulled off by a horse dropping in this manner ; but if he sits, as many of the awkward ones do, either sideways, or with his legs crossed

and his belly hanging over his knees, then such an accident is not to be wondered at. Take, for instance, such a man as Black Will, late on the Blenheim, but now on one of Costar's Oxford coaches, and I have no idea of his being pulled from his box by a horse dropping, although driving with the short wheel-rein. At all events, when the horse is found to be past recovery, by opening the hand the danger is removed, as the rein then falls out.

Another advantage attends the long wheel-rein, and that is, in case of a wheel-horse bolting at starting his coach, so as to snap both his traces (no uncommon occurrence, and I saw one in the Chester mail break three pair before they could start him); the coachman is then safe, whereas with the short one it is ten to one but he is pulled from the box with a violent jerk. Several lives have been lost in this way. In quick opposition work, also, long wheel-reins are best, as there is no occasion to buckle them (the buckle being at the end instead of at the side) till the coachman is up, and then it is immaterial whether they are buckled at all—a consideration *in minute and half time*. Indeed, I know one or two swells who have banished the buckles altogether from the leaders', as well as the wheelers' reins, on the ground of their being in the way of expeditious changing; but this must be awkward for their horse-keepers, as without the buckles they cannot tell the near from the off rein, when harnessing their horses, and then the coupling reins would be as often wrong as right.

On the other hand, there are advantages, and no

trifling ones, attending the short wheel-rein. In the first place, there is a neatness about it. There is not that bunch of reins hanging down a coachman's knees in apparent confusion, which is occasioned by the use of the long wheel-rein. In the second place, the short wheel-rein being so completely separated from the leader's rein, is much more handy, and more come-at-able with a cold hand or clumsy finger than when both run through the hand. But the chief advantage the short wheel-rein has over the long one is, as it relates to the near-wheel horse. If he is to be got at *in a hurry*, a mistake may easily be made with the long one, in consequence of its running *immediately under the leader's rein, and being completely confined by it*. When in this place, it can only be got at by fishing for it under that rein, or by drawing it *behind* the left hand, in both which cases a difficulty may arise. The leading rein passing over it completely prevents its being shifted. With the short one a coachman has nothing to do but to catch hold of it anywhere to the right of his left hand, where it is quite free, and a pull there operates either *way*, without the possibility of a mistake. If he wants to pull his wheel-horses to the off side of the road, he has nothing to do but to pull the rein to the right, and if to the near side, the same pull does it, only suffering the rein to run through his left hand, and when far enough to command his horses, gripping it firmly in that hand till he has got his coach into its place, and then letting it slide back to its original even bearing. Use, however, in a great measure regulates these matters ; but, were a coachman accustomed to the short wheel-

rein put to catch hold of four queer ones with the long one, he would be much at fault; and I have no hesitation in saying that, with the generality of coachmen and the generality of roads at a distance from the metropolis, the short one is the most safe and convenient. With your nimble-fingered London coachmen of the first order, and with horses all running up to their bits on roads like barn floors, I admit the superiority of the other. With horses of this description, and with gentlemen's horses, it may have the preference; and I should recommend all young beginners to accustom themselves to the use of it. Having acquired the use of the long, the short one can at any time be had recourse to, and, under some circumstances, it is certainly the best.

To make myself perfectly understood on this subject I find it necessary, as the lawyers say, to state a case. All roads are not macadamised; if they were, the reins on some coaches might be fastened to the foot-board, and the horses might gallop from end to end of their ground, with only an automaton to pull right or left. This, however, is not the case everywhere; and on many roads where all sorts of coaches travel, there are deep ruts and false quarters; that is to say, ruts, which, if a coach goes into them, will let her in deep enough to upset her. In the latter case, we will suppose a coachman driving four awkward horses with the long wheel-rein and a top-heavy load. He sees one of these false quarters on the off-side just before him: and his near wheel horse is one of those stiff-necked ones that refuses to answer to the rein, without assistance from his partner. What is then to be

done, for it must be done quickly? If he catch hold of him with the long wheel-rein, he can only do it *in the front* of his left hand, and there he must hold him, leaving his whip-hand, which in co-operation with the rein, can alone save him—engaged and useless : whereas, with the short wheel-rein, he would have nothing to do but to draw it smartly through his left hand, which would hold it fast, leaving the right at liberty to whip the other horse up to the pole, and thereby get the coach out. It may be said the long wheel-rein coachman may fish for his rein *behind* his hand. He may do so, but he may not find it. His hands may be numbed with cold, or it may be jumbled in with the others. I am also inclined to think there cannot be that *distinction* in the feel of wheel-horses and leaders with the long wheel-rein that there is with the short ; and I have particularly noticed this with London coachmen when bringing their coaches into town. For instance, when it happens, as it perpetually does, in the streets, that the leaders are stopped very suddenly, the long wheel-rein does not afford that immediate check to the wheelers, to prevent them running on the bars that the short rein does. It is true that the whole team may be stopped quickly with all the reins running through the left hand ; but not so when taken separately. There is not that independence between leaders and wheelers ; and when I see a man pulling at his horses with long wheel-reins, it always appears as if there were but one mouth to pull at (as in riding a horse), instead of four. There is also a very unsightly, as well as uncoachmanlike method that many

of the long-rein performers have adopted, of pulling up their horses ; and that is, instead of shortening their reins by drawing them through their left hand, they raise that hand as high as their chin, clawing the reins with the other, till their coach is stopped, thereby losing the use of the whip-hand, which, at all times, and on all occasions, should be at liberty.

When I have mentioned one other circumstance attending the short wheel-rein I shall dismiss the subject ; but I have been thus prolix in consequence of the wish of some of your correspondents to be particularly informed on the points in question. I have said, when quickness of execution is wanting, the short rein has the advantage, and I will attempt to prove it. We will suppose a coachman taking his coach into a narrow gateway, where the turn is to the right. After having pointed his leaders into it, he finds he has not taken ground enough for his coach to clear the off-side gate-post. No assistance is to be expected from any other horse in his team but the off-wheeler. With the short wheel-rein, one pull with the right hand, letting the rein draw through the left does the business, as it immediately leaves the right at liberty to whip that wheeler up to the pole ; but with the long rein, he must be lost nine times out of ten, as he would not let it out of his hand to enable him to whip his horse, and not more than one horse in ten could, in such a situation, bring his coach up without.

I must explain one apparent inconsistency in what I have said. I have stated that when a short wheel-rein

man goes to descend a hill, he draws the rein through his hand, and is, at that moment, driving with the long wheel-rein. It is true that the rein does not then rest on his hand ; but from the comparatively short length of it when compared with the usual length of the professed long rein, it only forms a sort of bow behind the coachman's hand, which prevents a possibility of a mistake, in catching hold of it, either by day or by night.

STANHOPES AND FASHIONABLE CARRIAGES.

To spend our lives amid one set of unchanging objects would afford us neither variety of sensations, images, nor ideas—all around us would have the sameness of a cell ; whereas travelling frees us from prejudices, and enlarges the sphere of our imaginations, by comparisons and observations essential to the character of a man. In humbler English, when on the road, every scene is a picture ; and, as Sterne observes, I pity the person who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry, ' 'Tis all barren ! ' For my own part, I have always filled a bumper to my favourite toast—' As we travel through life, may we live on the road ! ' Solomon himself had his hobbyhorse, therefore I may be allowed to have mine ; and I am free to admit, that so fond am I of the road, that when I have been in London more than a week, the sight of even the Exeter waggon does me good. As for Mr. Waterhouse's yard, when his seven mails are starting, it has more charms for me than the

finest scene in an opera. So much, then for taste, about which philosophers have long since given up disputing. The music for me is the music of the bars ; and the road, after all, is the grand theatre of life.

Had our present expedition in travelling been proposed to our ancestors, as a possible thing, they would have scouted it, as the illusion of a madman. So lately as 1742, the coach from London to Oxford was two days on the road, taking ten hours to go half way : the whole distance is now done—without the least distress, without the point of the thong being out of the coachman's hand—in six hours. So much for the art of mechanism (for to this, after all, is it due), reduced to the practical purposes of life ! This, however, is but the beginning. The master of mechanics laughs at strength ; and if a second Dædalus¹ do not spring up among us, and teach us to fly, there is little doubt but that, either by steam or air, before the present century expires, carriages will be transported without animal power.² Should this not be the case, such improvements are making in roads and carriages, that it looks as if there were no limitation to draught. Indeed, it is now upon record, that, assisted by the true principles of traction, a common cart-horse drew fifty-five tons six cwt. six miles in one hour and forty minutes, though he had the friction of twenty-four wheels to oppose him.

¹ Since I wrote the above, I have been informed that a patent has been applied for by a person who has invented a machine, in which we are to travel (*in vacuo*) at the rate of *two hundred* miles per hour, and that the first trial of it is to be from London to Brighton in fifteen minutes.

² How prophetic !—EDITOR.

Having spoken of air, I beg leave to observe that one of the first mechanics of the day is now actively employed in experiments to produce a propelling power by the aid of this element, which shall be available to the draught of carriages, and in which he indulges the most sanguine expectations of success. How far the introduction of it, as a substitute for horses, may be beneficial to such an agricultural country as this, I leave wiser heads to determine, and there will be plenty of time to consider the point. Should, however, any man have proposed a wager, even twenty years ago, that we should live to see the time when a coachman shall drive a coach a hundred miles a day, for two years in succession, without resting one day, the odds would have been much against him, if the task had not been deemed beyond human exertion. A man by the name of *Thoroughgood*, however, has done it, for more than two years, on the Norwich 'Times,' and we must admit that he is not badly named.

It is something remarkable, that, when writing on the subject of air, a balloon was hovering majestically over my head. I arose to look at it, but the sight afforded me neither satisfaction nor pleasure, and I wish a stop were put to these aerial travellers. We are, perhaps wisely, denied a road through the elements, lest our curiosity might tempt us to soar too high; and as to the art of ballooning, there is nothing in it. The very humblest grub sets us the example; for, though the gossamer spider is heavier than the air that surrounds her, yet the web she weaves is so much lighter that she travels upon it

with the greatest safety. The spider, however, has but one current of air to contend with; but the man in a balloon has he knows not how many, and he is at the mercy of them all. In short, a balloon can never be applied to the useful purposes of life, and is therefore a waste of time, money, and labour.

In the progress of these letters, it is my intention to enter very fully into the various departments of the road. I do this, partly in fulfilment of my promise in my former communications; partly at the request of my friends, amongst whom I have the honour of reckoning an amateur of upwards of twenty years' standing—an excellent judge, and who has expressed his approbation, in strong terms, of what I have already written on this subject; and partly with a view that good will finally result to the public from some practical observations which I shall offer, as relating to prevention of accidents to passengers by the public coaches, *and from which accidents the public have a strong claim on the proprietors to be made more secure than they now are.* I shall confine myself at present to what we should call 'light summer work,' and touch a little on the business of the day.

When I first started in life, a gentleman would have been ashamed of being seen in the streets of London in a gig; whereas, now, he is almost ashamed of being seen out of one—the use of them having nearly superseded that of legs, or a saddle-horse. So much, in the first place, for fashion; though, at the same time, it must be observed that the London coachmakers have to thank themselves for this great addition to their trade; for, to

their credit be it spoken, in point of neatness, utility, and safety, they have accomplished more than their most sanguine hopes could have anticipated, in their improvements on the old model of a one-horse chair—the term by which a gig was originally denominated ; and even Royalty itself is now to be seen in a modern Dennet or Stanhope. The latter takes its name from the Hon. Fitzroy Stanhope, a coachman of well-known celebrity, and who, we are unfortunately obliged to remember, had his foot and instep amputated in consequence of being upset in a gig.

Independent of the coachmakers, there are two other classes of persons which widely partake of the profits arising from the unbounded circulation of these two-wheeled vehicles ; and those are—the medical profession, and undertakers ; for among the whole catalogue of the daring pursuits of an Englishman, there is not a tithe of the fractures, amputations, and deaths that the system of gig-driving produces ; and this, mainly, because this said art is practised by thousands who know nothing about it. Knowledge, however, in this instance, is often put to defiance, as several old and experienced road-coachmen have been killed out of gigs. For my own part, when I see a modern gig with a powerful thorough-bred horse, full of condition, in its shafts, two similes always present themselves. First, it reminds me of a boat, inasmuch as there is only a one-inch plank between those who sit in it, and eternity ; and, secondly, it brings to my imagination, a canister tied to a dog's tail. Amongst all my acquaintance, I scarcely know of one

who has not had an escape out of a gig ; and as for myself, I have had a dozen—some of which I now shudder to think of. Some ridiculous scenes, however, often occur. A brother-in-law of mine was once returning from shooting with a friend, whom nothing would satisfy but taking a favourite pointer into the gig with them to save his feet. They had not proceeded far, when the dog contrived to get one of his paws beyond the footboard, and stuck his claws, unobserved by the party into the horse's rump. The moment *the mill* began his friend jumped out ; and recovering his legs, ran after the gig (which the horse was kicking to atoms with my brother-in-law in it), crying out, 'Take care of my new gun ! Pray take care of my new gun !' My poor brother-in-law, however, had enough to do to take care of himself ; for although he escaped with his life, he pitched upon his head in the road, and feels the effects of his fall to this day.

A still better anecdote than this is related of a gentleman in Staffordshire. Meeting with his nephew one day in London, they began to compare notes, and it appeared that each was bound for Oxford, the next morning. 'How do you travel ?' said the nephew. 'I shall post it,' replied the uncle. 'You had better come with me in my gig,' rejoined the nephew : 'we shall do it comfortably in ten hours.' 'D—n your gigs !' said the old one : 'I hate the very sight of them.' 'Oh,' replied the young one, 'mine is the quietest horse in England. A lighted cracker tied to his tail would not alarm him ; and as to milling, he does not know what it is.'

On hearing this, and ruminating on the expense of posting, the old gentleman consented to the proposal, and at eight o'clock the next morning they were under weigh. When they had got out of the park, the uncle told his nephew that he had been brushing up his recollection, and he believed he could say, that this was only the fifth time he ever had been in a gig in his life. 'Oh,' said the nephew, 'my horse beats you by chalks, for *he never was*. It is needless to add, that the old gentleman began to claw, (as we call it on the road), and was out of the gig in the twinkling of his eye.

One great advantage arising from the present style of gig-building is, that it has pretty nearly exploded tandem-driving, as the low seat of the driver precludes his having any power over a leader. In a former letter, I ventured to assert that hunting bag foxes with harriers was only doing things by halves, but driving tandems partakes still more of the mongrel system.

It cannot, however, be denied, but that in the hands of a skilful tandem-driver (quite distinct, I repeat, from a coachman), where a leader and wheeler will shift their places, in no way can the power of horses in harness be so available as in a light tandem;¹ but under any circumstances danger is at hand, as a man is always at the mercy of his leader. It is told of a gentleman who was conscious of this power in his horse, that, being on the point of starting for a drive out of some yard in London,

¹ The shape of the original tandem cart body was taken from the front boot of a coach with box seat, and having a seat, such as the guard had on the mails, at the back.—EDITOR.

and being asked by a friend which road he was going, he replied, '*You must ask my leader, for I cannot tell you till I get into the street.*' This answer was no less candid than true; for if a leader make a sudden stop—having no coupling rein to secure him—he has it all his own way; and the best coachman in England can have no power over him, for the moment he stops his reins are useless. The only chance a man has of being sure of his mark with a tandem, is to have a leader that will run well up to his bit, and want nothing but holding, as then, by keeping him in his place, and making the wheeler work up to him, the draught may be shared between them; but the moment the point of the thong goes out of the hand of the driver, that moment things go wrong. The two best tandem drivers that I ever came across in my travels through life, are a gentleman by the name of Wetherall, who resides in Gloucestershire, and a Captain Brydges, of Hampshire. Were a leader in a tandem always *running home*, as it is with a coach-horse, the case would be much altered.

Though fashion, in everything, bears sovereign sway, yet there may be a tandem-driver or two yet left, and to such I offer the following hint:—The beauty of coachmanship with four in hand, is to point the leaders, in making a turn, so that the wheelers may follow nearly in their tracks. This, however, cannot be done with a tandem in a short turn, and for this reason: Unless you reduce your leader's draught, the wheel-horse cannot contend against his increased power, and, though never so good a whipped horse, he will be drawn out of

his ground by the excess of the power which his partner acquires by being so much before him. The leader, therefore, must be always more or less eased of his draught, when he is to make his turn, if it be a short one, or it cannot be done handsomely, or with safety.

I have been very much amused with Oxford men and their tandems, some of which I have seen turned out in a very dragsmanlike style. I remember hearing the following remark made upon one of them, by that well-known coachman Mr. Annesley, of Bletchington, at the Cottisford Heath races:—‘Now,’ says he, ‘I have particularly noticed that tandem, and no less than six times has it been around this race-course, *through six fallow fields*; and by the time it gets back to Oxford—six-and-thirty miles by the mile-stones—it shan’t be a bad day’s work!’ One of the unfortunate horses, whose name I cannot now recollect, had been a capital hunter in his time, and it was lamentable to think that he should come to such an end at last.

On another occasion, I saw an Oxford tandem set out one wet, dark, and blowing night from Chapel House, and the start was rather good. The coachman and his friend were both well sprung; and on the latter not being quite so quick at loading himself as he had been in the morning, the other called to him, and said, ‘Come, make haste and get up! You know this mare won’t stop much longer.’ ‘Let her go, and be d——d, then,’ said the other, as he was creeping up the step, ‘for you know *I had rather be upset than not.*’

It unfortunately always happens, that a system, however good, is immediately acted upon in extremes, so soon as it becomes what is idly called 'the fashion.' Thus, the lowering of gigs from the absurd height to which they were formerly carried, is now got to an excess, and we see a man sitting below his horse's tail, with his reins descending from the top of the dashing iron, into his hand. This is a fault which will cure itself; for, independent of the miserable figure the driver cuts in so humble a situation, very few horses are to be met with, which can be driven with so little control over them as this method affords—the angle which the reins describe, before coming to the hand, in addition to the friction they have to contend with, in passing over the dashing iron (to say nothing of the deadening effect such friction must have on the mouth of the horse), destroying so much of his power. It was only this very day, that I saw an instance of a gentleman being unable to guide his horse between two hackney coaches, till his servant got to his head, as he was pulling at him, almost at right angles, and had no command over him. With respect to the cabriolets, now so much in use, though we know nothing of them on the road, they are very good things for Frenchmen, or for Englishmen who are afraid of being melted.

Taking into consideration, however, the immense number of gigs that are always at work, the inexperienced hands that so many of them are in, and the kind of horse now driven in them, we have no reason to complain of the accidents that occur; but, on the contrary, we are

surprised there are not more. The safety rein is certainly a security, in case of an awkward driver letting his horse get the other under his tail, to which the late unsightly length of tail in horses driven in single harness has greatly contributed. The contrivance, however, did not escape the critical eyes of coachmen, who sarcastically observed, 'Why that there gentleman can't drive one horse, without two pair of reins! What a pretty coachman he must be!' Nevertheless, they are good things in awkward hands. Every man who travels the road, has been sickened with the sight of the words 'safe coach' painted on the different coaches. Give me a safe coachman, and I will not quarrel with the coach; for the centre of gravity can be lost in a three-legged stool, as well as in the highest ladder.

A fashion has lately prevailed in the neighbourhood of the metropolis of driving gigs without a whip, than which nothing looks more uncoachmanlike, or absurd. A man in a gig, with his coat over his knees, squaring his elbows with the affectation of a coachman, and all this to manage one horse, cuts but a sorry figure, at best; but without a whip, he is worse, as he does not know what to do with his right hand. Add to this, danger is often avoided by the use of the whip; and I am sorry to see some swell coachmen, on the road, have fallen into this uncoachmanlike practice. A man who is driving four horses never knows what moment he may want his whip, and it never should be out of his hand. But for the whip, I should once have upset sixteen people, when coming at a rapid pace down Feather-bed Lane, with Bobart's

Oxford coach. The near leader shied at a wheel-barrow, which was by the road-side, and having a dead mouth, forced his partner up the opposite bank. Having my whip at hand, I hit the other horse sharply under the bar, and being a good whipped one, he brought his partner into his place again, before the coach could follow him. 'All right!' said Bobart, who was on the roof, with a significant shake of his head, as much as to say, 'It was very near being all wrong.' For my own part, I would not travel with a coachman (however clever he may be), *on some roads*, who makes a practice of sticking his whip on the coach, instead of having it in his hand.

Having had my share of accidents out of gigs, it may not be amiss to state a few precautions. Nothing is so likely to make a horse kick, as being pinched by any part of the harness—particularly the pad. Road coachmen are so aware of this, that a new-fashioned pad is getting into use among them, coming almost to a conical point in the centre, instead of preserving the semi-circular form. This prevents the possibility of any pressure on the backbone, between which and the withers of the horse there is a strong sympathetic feeling. When wrung in either of those places, he betrays more evident symptoms of uneasiness than if galled on the shoulder, or any other part, and his patience, under the injury, is oftentimes exhausted. He then sets to work to relieve himself, and, too often, kicks himself out of his harness.

It is to the above-mentioned circumstances that I

have to attribute an accident, which occurred to myself, and therefore my authority is good. I purchased a horse which had never been in harness before, and put him at wheel in a tandem. He went fourteen miles as quietly as if he had run as many years in the mail, when all of a sudden without the least provocation—without a whip, rein, or even a fly touching him—he began to *mill*, and, to use a coachman's phrase, 'a sack was wanting to bring home the gig.' With the assistance of the reins I escaped myself, but my servant was a good deal hurt. On examining the harness, we found that the pad pressed on his withers, and having some hills to go down, the pressure was more than he could bear, so he merely tried to relieve himself, for he was by no means a vicious horse.

There is another precaution in a gig, of which I have more than once found the good effects; and that is never to sit with the feet under the body, but always to have one, if not both, out before it. A few years back I was trying to keep pace with a friend of mine, who was better horsed than myself, on the return from a fishing party—the pipes being rather queer—when the horse I was driving choked in his collar, at the top of a hill, and fell as if he were shot. I had a passenger by the side of me, who was sitting with his feet under his belly, and consequently was thrown, with much violence, into the road. On my asking him if he were hurt, he said he could not tell, but 'what the d—l' said he, 'came of you?'—wondering, of course, that I had not shared the same fate with himself. I told him if he had been sitting as I was

sitting, he would not have had such a fall. I had five miles more to drive him, during which he took care to have his feet before him, but bade adieu to gig work, for the rest of his life. If he had not fallen on the horse's back before he went to the ground, it might have gone hard with him, as he was heavy and corpulent, and not made for *night work* in a gig.

My opinion has frequently been asked as to the effect of harness on hunters, or saddle-horses ; and whether it injures them for their respective purposes ? My answer has been, that I do not think it is fair play to a hunter to put him into harness at all ; but that, barring legs and feet, I do not conceive that light draught, such as that of a gig, can alter his natural action, unless he is very often at work. Heavy draught certainly renders horses unsafe for the road, but not until they have been at it, every day, for some time, or their legs or feet fail them—in-stance the many riding horses in post-masters' stables, who go as safely on the road as if they had never been in harness.

BEARING REINS, FAST COACHES, AND LINCH-PINS.

Science has produced a new era in the coaching world ; and, assisted by the unerring result of experience, has brought the conveyance of passengers and luggage throughout his Majesty's dominions to a pitch of excellence that, it is pretty generally admitted, cannot well be improved upon. We read that amongst the ancients

a place in heaven was awarded to such as had mainly contributed to the comforts and conveniences of life : so is our gratitude due to those of our own times who have directed their ability and labour to such happy results.

A writer to the 'Sporting Magazine,' speaking of French post horses, says, 'A few lessons from Nimrod on coupling-up, etc., would be of considerable utility. I have always admired beyond anything the perfect ease and liberty with which the French and Italian post-horses go, and I have in the same degree lamented the torture to which horses in this country are put by the bearing reins being so tight : it may do very well for London carriage horses, for it helps to give them what is termed a grand appearance ; but for posters I am persuaded it is anything but of service.

'A friend of mine, much accustomed to driving, once told me he could drive his horse ten miles farther without than with bearing reins, and five miles farther with snaffle bridles than he could with bits. Some years since I travelled post through France and Italy, and back to Calais, and, strange to say, I observed but one horse make anything like a serious trip, and I attributed this entirely to the freedom given to their heads.

'I wish some of your correspondents conversant with such matters would give us their opinions on them. In all other countries but England horses in harness are allowed the full liberty of their heads. As to the appearance that is given by bearing up, that is all custom—a very short time would familiarise the eye to a contrary system. The question then only is, what is best ?'

Now here I am called upon to observe upon a great inaccuracy in your correspondents. In this country we have no such term as *coupling up post horses* : it solely relates to coach horses, and it is evident that the humane writer here means *bearing up* the post horse. I will yield to no man in kind consideration towards my favourite animal ; but it savours of humbug to hear a man speak of the torture¹ of bearing up a post horse, and the still more indigestible language of his friend, who could exactly measure the powers of his horses with and without bearing reins, and in snaffle bridles and in bits.

I have clearly stated the absolute necessity of bearing up the coach horse, which equally applies to the hand post horse, with only this trifling distinction—the coach horse is generally more above his work than the post horse, and he is also always running home (*ergo*, in a hurry), which is not the case with the post horse. All those who have been accustomed to fast work well know the difficulty of holding horses together and having a perfect command over them, even with bearing reins ; but I will venture to add that the man is yet unborn who could drive some coaches that I could name without the use of these necessary articles. In the first place, there are many horses—sometimes whole teams—that will not face anything but the cheek ; and where is the arm that could bear the weight of four horses leaning upon it for an hour or more together, perhaps at full gallop ? How much soever humanity towards horses may be enjoined,

¹ After all, by bearing up a horse in harness, his head is very little more confined than when he is ridden on the road.

regard for our own species must prevail, and no horse in a coach or a post-chaise is safe without a bearing rein ; and for this reason, he is in constant danger, from having his head at liberty, of losing his bridle, by rubbing his head against the pole, or against the other horse, and then an accident is almost sure to happen, as was the case with the York 'Highflyer' coach¹ last year, by which a woman lost her life. To this must be added the certainty of his being the more likely to fall, which I have, I think, clearly proved in a former letter. As to any comparison holding between our road horses and those on the Continent, I cannot admit it, as the animals are of such a different description. Theirs are only one remove from the cart horse ; ours, three parts, if not quite, thoroughbred, and at least one-third of them have been either hunters or race horses. I know that here and there is to be found an advocate for no bearing rein—Mr. Ward, for instance, a good coachman of the Old School, but slow as to pace—and I had a pretty good taste of it last winter, when staying with Sir Bellingham Graham in Shropshire. He took it into his head to drive a pair of wheelers without bearing reins, and neither the baronet nor myself can soon forget the strain on the muscles of our arms when driving those horses, and how glad we were sometimes to change places. To so experienced a coachman as himself I did not intrude my opinion, much less attempt to instruct him ; but had I been the owner of the gallant little cropped horse that

¹ This very old-established and excellent coach is the one celebrated by the inimitable Hogarth.

went near-wheel, I would not only have put a bearing rein upon him, but a good tight side rein also: he should have pulled at something else besides my arm. Some people object to side reins upon a leader, in case of his partner bolting across the road, and taking him with him; but this cannot happen to a wheeler, as there is the pole, and the power of the leaders at the end of it to contend with and to stop him.

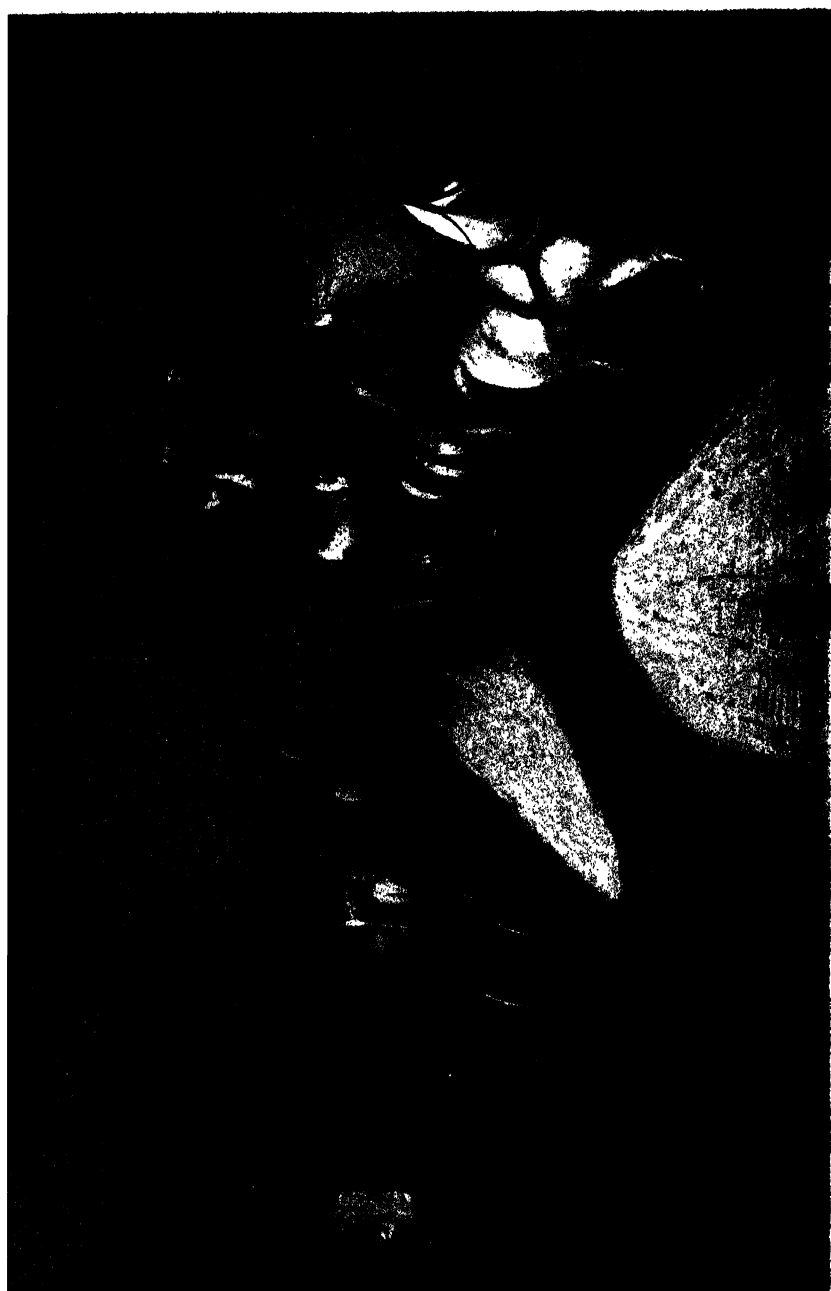
There is another reason, and a very strong one, in favour of the bearing rein. Many horses are good coach horses for six miles, but far from good ones for twelve miles. Towards the end of a stage, they begin to bore upon their bits; and were it not for the resistance of the bearing rein, they would get their heads down to their knees; and where is the man who could prevent this being the case with four jaded horses—having nothing to hang upon but his arm!

Your correspondent says he travelled post through France and Italy, and observed but one horse make anything like a serious trip; and he attributes this entirely to the freedom given to their heads! In answer to this, I can say, that much as I have traversed England, by day and by night, by coaches and by posting, it is fifteen years since I have seen either a coach, or post horse, fall on the road in harness; and I never saw but two coach horses and one post horse (the riding horse, and consequently *without a bearing rein*) fall, in all my experience on the road. I have reason to believe that the falling of an English hand-horse in posting is of very rare occurrence. Had I travelled the fiftieth part

of the distance I have gone, sitting behind English horses, with 'the entire freedom given to their heads,' I am quite certain I should not be now alive to record it.¹

It is one of the failings of our nature to look with indifference on a skill we do not possess; and, in consequence, many persons consider themselves proficient in an art which they never practised. Were your correspondent, to whom I have alluded, to give himself the trouble to ask a hundred coachmen the question, he would not find one amongst them who would venture to say that he was equal to the task of driving a fast coach without bearing reins on his horses, and I think this puts the matter at rest; but I must be allowed to add, that great credit is due to that coachman who, at the present pace, and with the present breed of horses, gets a fast coach through a country for twelve calendar months without any accident happening, unless it be one not within his power to prevent. Night coachmen, in particular are deserving of great praise, and particularly those who drive the mails, for they are now timed at a rate scarcely safe for lamplight. Were it not indeed for the exemplary change that has lately been effected in their moral character, innumerable accidents would happen; but a coachman drunk on his box is now never seen nor thought of. The risks these men run, however, are considerable, and they ought to be better paid than they are.

¹ Bearing reins have their uses and abuses.—ED.



When on the subject of mails and night-work, I must make one remark :—The proprietors who horse them are not sufficiently attentive to the state of the harness *on the ground worked by night*, whereas, above all other, it should be the best. If anything breaks by daylight, it is instantly observed, but not so in the night, for lamp-light is treacherous and uncertain. I do not wish to do so, but I could name two mails that have lately been *very frequently upset* in consequence of the rottenness of their night harness. Perhaps the proprietors—one of whom I know reads the ‘Sporting Magazine’—may take notice of this hint. Their duty to the public requires that they should. They receive handsome fares for their passengers, and it is but right that they should take every possible care of their living cargo.

As it is my intention to touch on every part of the extensive system now adopted on our roads, which has attained an excellence far beyond our most sanguine expectation, I must divide my subject into heads, and treat of each separately.

Fast Coaches.—Had our present expedition on the road been proposed to our ancestors, they would have considered it as the dream of a lunatic. This, however, is self-evident : by the improvement in the structure of coaches, added to the capital state of the roads, four inside, and ten outside passengers, with their luggage, are conveyed at the rate of ten miles an hour, with more ease to themselves, and considerably less punishment to the horses that draw them, than was formerly the case

when the rate of travelling was three miles an hour.¹ When we consider that this increased pace makes a difference of five hours between London and Birmingham, how great must be the benefit to the commercial world! This is not all. I contend, that passengers are more secure in their persons when travelling at this expeditious and agreeable rate, than they were formerly at little more than six miles in the hour.

I think, however, I hear some of the cautious ones exclaim—‘Ah! this ten mile an hour work is all very well; but danger attends it.’ This, barring unavoidable casualties, I deny. On the contrary, I maintain that, as the roads are now formed, a coach running by daylight, and in proper hands (and none other should be put upon such fast work), is equally safe when going ten miles in the hour, as when she is going seven. To keep her time, no galloping is required, unless indeed it be now and then up a short pitch, where no danger can accrue. I have had my share of galloping coaches, and I think I may say that I have gone as fast on a coach box as I ever went over a country. I do not, however, pretend to deny that there is danger attending galloping coach horses down hill, or on even ground; and if an accident happens it must be a bad one. The goodness of a road is no preservative against it; on the contrary, it is very possible that if she takes to swing, she may go over from

¹ I remember being struck with the lively notice taken by Mr. Cobbett of one of our modern stage coaches. After having described the beauty of the horses, the neatness of the coach and harness, and the improvement in the breed and manners of the coachmen, he concludes by saying, ‘Away goes half the population of a village at the rate of eight miles an hour.’

the very circumstance of the road being so level and so smooth—there being nothing on its surface to hold the wheels to the ground. Another thing, not generally known or suspected, will cause a coach to swing, and thereby become dangerous; and that is—if there should be two horses at wheel, whose stride in their gallop differs much as to extent, their unequal draught will invariably set the coach on the roll; and unless the pace moderates, even the forewheel passing over a small stone might, under such circumstances, cause her to upset. If it were possible to make the stride and draught of four horses in a coach *quite equal*, their galloping upon level ground would have very trifling effect on the lateral motion of their coach, as we find to be the case whilst it is ascending a hill, when every horse is at work. Much, however, under all circumstances, depends upon the build of the carriage. The ‘Bull and Mouth’¹ coaches, though heavy, and not the best to follow, carry their loads extremely well; but for fast work, those made by Messrs. Wright and Powell, in East street, Clerkenwell, eclipse all, and these builders are now much employed

¹ Perhaps it is not generally known whence this great coach house took its name or sign.—When Henry the Eighth took the town of Boulogne, the event was magnified by the servile flatterers of the day into something so heroic, that the words Boulogne Mouth became a popular subject for signs. Consequently Boulogne Mouth was chosen for the inn in question; but the name of the inn outliving the fame of the conquest, an ignorant painter was employed, by a still more ignorant landlord, to paint a new sign, when he ingeniously represented Boulogne Mouth harbour by a bull with a wide gaping mouth. This sign may still be seen over the entrance to the ‘Bull and Mouth’ yard at the back of the ‘Queen’ Hotel (late ‘Bull and Mouth’ Inn).—ED.

by the gentlemen dragsmen of the present day. The form of their coaches, having their boots dropped as low as possible between the springs, is very much in favour of safe travelling, by keeping the weight as near the ground as it can be placed; and the excellent manufacture of their springs is a most material preventive of a coach rolling, and thereby losing its equilibrium.

It never happened to me but once to be all but overturned, merely by the rapid motion of a coach, on the finest and smoothest bit of road in England; and this was owing to the cause I have already spoken of—the unequal stride of two horses at wheel. The lateral motion of the coach at first was trifling; but she soon began to roll to that degree that the passengers—myself amongst the rest—thought she must go over, and were greatly alarmed. Fortunately for us all, the centre of gravity was not lost, and she kept her legs; but had she not been in the hands of a very skilful driver, over she must have gone, and for this reason—had he complied with the requests of his passengers to pull his horses *short* nothing could have saved her, as by so doing he would have thrown the weight still more upon the fore wheels; but his presence of mind did not forsake him, and his skill saved us. Instead of attempting to restrain the speed of his horses, *in a body*, he only eased his leaders, and took away all draught from the head of pole, which would there have acted like the tail to a paper kite, and sent us all to perdition. When the coach recovered her equilibrium—which was one of the happiest moments of my life—our coachman said, that so near was

it being 'a case,' that he really believed two pounds weight more, on either side of the roof, would have brought us all to the ground.

In galloping coach-horses I have observed the following fact:—If the leaders lead off with two opposite legs, the motion of the coach is considerably truer than when each horse uses the same leg; and the swing bars also will be much more at rest. The bulk of mankind is made to act rather than to think; but in the course of my subject I intend going a little more philosophically to work on these matters, and will endeavour to point out, on unerring principles, the chief causes of most of the accidents that happen to coaches on the road.

Were I in Parliament I would long since have brought in a bill to prevent any stage-coach travelling the road with their wheels secured only by the common linch-pin. In the first place, as proprietors make their own charge to passengers for their fares, and against which they have no appeal, they are bound to secure them, as much as is possible, from danger, in their journey. For several years past no coach has gone out of the 'Bull and Mouth' yard without the patent box to the wheels, and their coaches run to Exeter and back without a wheel being taken off; as also to Shrewsbury, and farther. This completely answers the common objections made to this safe-guard—namely, that if a wheel with the patent box should fail, the coach is hung up on the road. Now, although I have made particular inquiries, I cannot hear of such an occurrence having

happened. Of course, the coach is turned out sound and right from the London yard, and there is very little chance of her not returning to it in the same state—particularly as the roads now are. The mails, however, more completely answer this objection than anything I can advance. They have always used the patent box—a patent of their own—and how very few instances are there of their being stopped from the failure of them! I never heard of any.

Proprietors will tell us the double linch-pin is quite safe; but this I deny. To gentlemen's carriages, which have not the patent box, there is what is called the screw-nut—which, turning in a contrary direction to the wheel, will, in case of the linch-pin being lost, not only prevent the wheel coming off, but, by its own operation, will confine it so fast as scarcely to be able to turn round. Stage-coaches have not even this precaution; they depend solely upon two linch-pins, fastened on by the same strap, which linch-pins may both break or be lost, and which strap may also fail. Certain, however, is it, that innumerable accidents have happened to coaches from wheels coming off, and, in these improving and fast times, such chances should not be allowed to exist.¹

When I first travelled with my favourite Southampton 'Telegraph,' her wheels were only secured by the double linch-pin, and the consequence was, her often leaving one of them behind her. She then had recourse to another expedient, one most essential to so fast a

¹ All stage-coaches should have mail axles, and the utility and appearance of these axles equally suit them for mail phaetons, breaks, &c.—ED.

coach. A bent stay worked in what is called a worm screw, which twines around the hinder part of the box of the wheel. When the linch-pin was taken out, the wheel, thus situated, could not be taken off until it made one turn and a half *backwards* on the axle. The proprietors of this coach having now gone to Messrs. Wright and Powell, their coaches have Mason's patent boxes to the wheels, so that no further danger can be apprehended on this head. The last time I travelled by it, we had one of the new coaches, and Peer said it was almost impossible to make her roll or swing.

To show how very little aware passengers in general are of danger in a coach—and

Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise—

I will step out of the road for a moment to relate an anecdote of this celebrated 'Telegraph':—When the opposition between the 'Independent' and itself was at its height, a lady was booked inside for Southampton, and a friend was appointed to meet her at the usual hour of arriving. As he was walking in the streets, he espied the lady in a coach more than two hours before he expected her, and as soon as it stopped he went up to her, and asked her why she had not come in the 'Telegraph'? 'Why this is the "Telegraph,"' replied the lady, 'and *we should have been here sooner*, only we were obliged to wait for horses at Popham Lane.' Now the fact was, the two coaches had been racing all the way down, perform-

ing the distance—seventy-seven miles from Hyde Park Corner—in six hours ; and not expecting the ‘Telegraph’ so soon, the horse-keeper at Popham Lane had not begun to harness his horses when it arrived. These coaches have now given up all this larking. They give and take the road, as we call it ; and though nine times in ten the ‘Telegraph’ is first, I must do the ‘Independent’ the justice to say that it is worked in a very superior manner. I know of no two such coaches on the same road.

It is somewhat singular, but yet true, that in our fast work on the road, we have taken a hint from our neighbours (the French), although fast work with them is quite out of the question, if only from the nature of their tackle—*harness* I must not call it. I allude to the short stage, or ‘post,’ as they term it. Very few of our fast coaches now run more than ten miles, and many not much more than half the distance. This is, however, the only way to make stock last in quick work, and proprietors have at last found it out. As I have before remarked, a horse may be a good coach horse for six miles, but a very bad one for twelve. If then he is running half his ground in distress, it is soon all over with him. Nature finds herself unequal to the task ; and when she says ‘enough,’ a fresh horse must be purchased.

There is no part of coaching economy in which a greater alteration has been made, than in the act of changing horses. It scarcely appears credible that four horses can be taken from a coach, and four others put

into their places, in the very short space of sixty seconds; but so it is. A quarter of an hour, or at least ten minutes, was the usual time allotted to this purpose when I first knew the road; but at the present day, unless some business is to be transacted—such as taking fares for passengers, setting down, getting out parcels, etc.—I should say, the average is three minutes for each change, with fast coaches. There is, however, one practice attending this harlequin-like performance which I must condemn, and which I would not suffer, were I the proprietor of the fastest coach in England; and that is—having no buckles at the end of either leaders' or wheelers' reins. This is what I call throwing away a chance; for should one of them drop out of the coachman's hand, it would not be in his power to recover it, and an accident must be the consequence. Let us suppose that the one-minute-time, with the opposition in sight, will not allow a coachman to buckle his reins at the hand before he gets on his box, there is no reason why he should not do so after he has proceeded a little way on the road. Prevention is always preferable to cure; and well inclined as I am towards everything belonging to the road, yet, were I on a jury, and an action were brought against a coach for injury sustained by a passenger, I would lay it on thick if I found it proceeded from the cause I have alluded to. It may be very 'swell,' but it is not safe; and this is not only my own suggestion—I have heard the subject canvassed more than once, and I know the feeling towards it. A word then to the wise!

There was an excellent remark made a short time back by an old coach proprietor—namely, that now-a-days (alluding to the smart coaches we see on the road) the gold is put on the outside of the coaches, whereas, in his younger days, it went into the proprietors' pockets. There is doubtless much truth in this pithy sentence. The consumption of horse flesh in fast work is a most considerable drawback on the earnings of a coach—the average being not more than three years for each horse's work, whereas when the pace is slow, it is more than double that period. Neither do the fares cover this increased expense—not making more than one-fourth difference¹—and seldom so much—in the fastest coach and the slowest.

ON COACHMEN.

Although it may be said that intellect directs it, yet it is the structure of the hand of man that gives him the superiority over other animals : but the use of this hand varies wonderfully with various persons. Having, I believe, mentioned most things relating to harnessing horses, let us suppose them put to their coach, all ready for a start—the reins thrown across the off wheel-horses'

¹ The fare from my house to London by Southampton. 'Telegraph,' or 'Independent'—ten miles an hour—is twelve shillings: by 'Old Salisbury'—six miles an hour—ten shillings, which is only one-fifth.

loins, with the ends of them hanging upon the middle terret of his pad, and the whip also thrown across the backs of the wheelers. The coachman makes his appearance. If he be a coachman, a judge will immediately perceive it ; for as a certain philosopher observes, 'every situation in life serves for formation of character,' and none more so than a coachman's. I was going to say—only let a judge see him come out of his office (pulling on his glove) ; but this I will say—let him see him walk round his horses, alter a coupling rein, take up his whip and reins, and mount his box, and he will at once pronounce him a neat, or an awkward one. Perhaps there is nothing in which knowledge of an art without execution goes for less than in that of driving four-in-hand ; for, although a coachman may have science in his calling, yet it is very possible that, from a natural awkwardness of action (if I may be allowed to apply this word to his case), he may be totally unable to put it into effect with anything like a graceful, or even neat and appropriate, movement of his arms and hands : and in nothing, short of the higher accomplishments of our nature, is a certain propriety and neatness more required than in handling the reins and whip from a coach box. Indeed, the motions of the latter must be observed with something like a mathematical precision ; and the quickness and lightness of finger required to suit some horses' mouths, is far greater than those unacquainted with driving would suppose. This I must say—I have never seen the two qualities combined : I have never seen an

awkward and a good four-horse coachman in the same individual.¹

I am quite of opinion with Chester Billy, that 'driving four horses is a pretty *hart*.'² That to perform it to perfection is within the power of but few, every man whose inclination leads him to the notice of these matters is aware. Within these few years, however, a superior class of man is to be found upon the coach box, and for this advantage we are mainly indebted to two circumstances: first the driving clubs; and the notice taken of coachmen by gentlemen of rank and fortune; and secondly, to the boxes being placed on springs, which was not the case when I first mounted them. It is now a common practice for passengers to pay an extra shilling for the box place, whereas, formerly, a man not wishing to be initiated in the 'pretty art' would give something to be anywhere else. I think I now feel the thumps my

¹ It is amusing to think how lightly some persons appreciate the accomplishments of a coachman; and this brings to my recollection two anecdotes on this head, one of which relates to myself. I had not been many days in my present residence before I was told a person wished to speak with me. I found a man in what is called in some countries a smock, but in Hampshire a round frock, and the following dialogue took place:—

'Well, my man, what is your pleasure?'

'Beg your pardon, sir, but I hears you wants a zarvant.'

'What can you do?'

'Most everything. I can plough, sow, drill, and look after horses and cattle, and *drive four-in-hand*.'

The following anecdote was told me by a friend, and applies well here:—A gentleman's coachman, or what we call '*a wap-john*,' brought his master's carriage, four-in-hand, to the door of an inn, not in the most coachman-like manner, when a knowing boy in the street addressed him thus:—'I say, coachee, *who feeds the pigs when you be from home?*'

² Billy was bred in Shropshire, where they never lose an opportunity of pronouncing the letter *H*.

hips have had against the hoop of the box, when I was young and light, as the coach proceeded at a good rate over a broken pavement; and a coachman being thrown from his box, when wide-awake and sober, was then a common occurrence. Perhaps it is not generally known, that to Mr. Warde, of Squerries, are we indebted for the first coach box ever placed upon springs. He prevailed upon the proprietors of the Manchester 'Telegraph' to adopt the use of them, and thence they were called Telegraph springs.

By the way—speaking of the Manchester 'Telegraph,' and the improvement of the present race of coachmen—I am induced to touch upon the celebrated opposition between that coach and the 'Defiance,' which lasted longer, and was carried on with more spirit than any other upon record. Both coaches have stood their ground, and are worked in a very superior style; but my chief reason for mentioning them here is, to pay a tribute to the two very swell coachmen who drove them out of London at least fifteen years ago; and who may almost be said to have set the example of neatness in dress, and respectability of appearance and demeanour, which is so characteristic of coachmen of the present day. These were, John Marchant on the 'Telegraph,' and Bob Snow on the 'Defiance'—the latter for some years past a proprietor of, as well as at work upon a Brighton coach,¹ Rather a singular circumstance attended my first acquaintance with him. I was going down the road with his Manchester coach, and I had appointed an old friend in his

¹ 'The Dart.'

line to meet me at his yard in the City, to introduce me to him. As I was walking down Fleet Street, I observed a man on the other side the street, just such a man as I pictured to my own mind Mr. Snow to be ; and walking quietly behind him, looked him over, found that he was 'all right'—a pink in his way, and as well dressed for the road as a gentleman ought to be for Almack's. His footsteps led me to the 'Swan with Two Necks,' where the introduction took place, and I was highly pleased with the whole turn-out. All was as it should be, from the nose piece on the leaders' heads, to the roller on the splinter bar.

There was another very celebrated man on the 'Telegraph' at this time, at the other end of the ground, and indeed he was, till very lately, on the 'Defiance'—the well-known Harry Douglas, about the size of two ordinary men ; who, as an old friend of mine and a great admirer of his talent observes, 'could gallop a coach without it swinging, and who could drink as much as would scald a porker, though never seen to be the worse for it.' Harry was a great favourite with the Manchester gentlemen, and an artist of the first order.

It may be truly said of Douglas, that 'like Amphitryon of old, he was *great* in the art.' Exclusive of his science, he was one of the strongest men ever seen. His hands were unusually large ; his fingers immense ; and such was his power on his box, that he could grapple with four bad horses in a way that will seldom be seen again. He could, as it were, almost lift them over their stage. He sat high on the bench ; his left arm raised

more than is usual, and his right arm was terrible. He was a jovial fellow over a bowl, singing many excellent songs, but was booked in *the down mail* about a month since, on a road on which there is no turning back. In many essentials to a coachman, he has left few equals behind him.

There are two or three more of the old school whose names should be recorded in the Annals of the Road, as having arrived at the top of their profession, and whose characters have been free from stain. Of John Besford, on the Exeter 'Subscription,' I have already spoken in terms of high respect; and I must here pay a tribute to the memory of the late Jack Hale, a coachman of extraordinary merit, and a man of excellent natural talent. He was also on the Manchester 'Defiance,' but latterly worked upon the lower Oxford road, and was one of the quickest of *his day*. I remember hearing a friend of mine say in the presence of Mr. Kenyon, that he went down Henley hill on Jack Hale's coach, in a hard frost, without the chain on the wheel, but, added he, 'I did not like it.'—'Oh,' said Mr. Kenyon, 'you were as safe as when in your bed.' Jack was chief manager, and one of the founders of the Benevolent Club,¹ and much looked up to by the fraternity.

Of the late Jack Bailey, on the Birmingham and Shrewsbury Old 'Prince of Wales,' the tutor of so many of us, I have already spoken as quite a top-sawyer of the old school. When he died, he left his watch to Sir Henry Peyton, who wears it to this day, though with a

¹ See pp. 66 and 119.

new face to it ; for the old one was *ornamented* with a race horse, a greyhound, a fighting cock, and a bull dog, and Sir Henry's picture in the centre. Jack was also a great ally of the great Mr. John Warde, who worked very frequently on the 'Old Prince' in former days, and by his own account, brought many a ton of bad shillings¹ into London. Mr. Warde drove this coach a race, from London to Oxford, against the Gloucester coach, and won it. Nothing on the road was better horsed than the 'Prince' in Bailey's day, for the load it carried, and its time ; but it would not be thought much of now. It is still going, and Jobson, one of its coachmen on the lower ground, whose horses I have driven many hundred miles, now keeps the 'Talbot' inn at Shrewsbury, a house of the first style, and where Mr. Jobson is as much esteemed as he was upon his box.

There are two or three more artists of the old school who must have a niche here, and I shall commence with Jem Howell, with whom, I have no doubt, at least nine-tenths of my readers are acquainted. Jem is one of Mr. Costar's (of Oxford) oldest servants, and was, the Lord knows how many years, on his Oxford and Birmingham day-coach, driving it as far as Shipston-upon-Stour, after his breakfast, and driving it back again to Oxford in time for his dinner. Now whether it were, that the public thought Jem and his master were only half awake ; or whether it were that they thought they might as well go

¹ This coach was generally very heavily laden with Birmingham hardware, and no doubt the Birmingham shillings often made up part of the load.

from Birmingham to London in nearly the same time as Jem's day-coach conveyed them from Birmingham to Oxford, I know not ; but it so happened, that about ten years ago, the Birmingham 'Aurora' commenced running from that place to London in one day ; and, in consequence of this, Costar's party put on the 'Courier,' in opposition to the 'Aurora,' each of which, as the opposition was strong and the work well done, took so much of the shine out of Jem Howell's day-coach, that about twelve months since he left it.

As a coachman with the short wheel-rein (and he says no man can drive four horses with the long one), Jem Howell stands very high, being supposed to be as good a judge of what a coach-horse can do as any man of his day ; and as an honest servant to his employers, we may put him quite in the top hole. In proof of his skill in his art, it is only necessary to state, that, although his pace was not slow (say at least eight miles an hour), his horses were always as fat as bacon pigs, and a poor one put into his coach soon got his back up. It was also well worth an extra fare to travel with Jem Howell, and hear his quaint remarks on the road ; for he has a talent for repartee which is very seldom excelled. It happens that I have a near relation at the head of one of the Colleges in Oxford, and I once took the liberty of telling him, that, if Jem had had as good an education as himself and the rest of the big-wigs, he would have chopped logic with any of them.

Some of my best anecdotes of this noted character will not exactly bear print, but he has amused myself

and several of my friends many a good hour. It was highly diverting to hear his remarks on the opposition coaches,¹ which ran his road. I once heard a passenger for Birmingham go up to him and say—‘I shall *not* go with you to-day, Jem ; I shall go by the “Aurora.”’—‘By all means, sir,’ observed Jem, ‘go by the “Aurora ;” they will take you cheaper than I can, and break your neck into the bargain.’ His hint to his old master Mr. Costar, that he must change his service, was by no means amiss. ‘Now, sir,’ said he, ‘do you think my coach and I would be missed upon the road if we was to stop at home for a fortnight?’—Jem is a great cocker, and we are apt to take our similes and comparisons from favourite subjects. A friend of mine was travelling with him once, and a gentleman in black passed the coach, to whom Jem made his obeisance. ‘Who is your friend?’ said my friend. ‘What!’ replied Howell, ‘don’t you know parson ——? I thought everybody knew him. He’s a right good one, *inside* of a church or *out* ;² and they tell me, when he preaches *the church is as full as a cockpit*!’

No man in a humble situation in life has met with greater patronage than Jem Howell, and amongst his steady friends may be reckoned Mr. Annesley, Mr. Harrison, Sir Henry Peyton, Lord Clonmel, and many

¹ The finish to the ‘Courier’ coach was rather unique. For some time it had carried nothing, which did not suit the late Mr. Jolly, of Enstone, who horsed it. Seeing it change horses one day at his stables without a single passenger, he went up to the horse-keeper as soon as he had taken off the leaders, and said, ‘Now bring this coach after me ;’ so taking it into a barn, he locked it up, saying, ‘This coach has carried a *guard and coachman quite long enough for me*!’

² Technical.

others attached to the road, and no doubt he is in very comfortable circumstances. He now drives the Worcester 'Mercury' into London.

I have not yet done with the old ones. Many of my friends, to the northward of London, would consider me very culpable, and indeed I should consider myself guilty of an injustice to merit and good conduct, were I to omit the mention of that very celebrated performer, Dan Herbert, upwards of thirty years on the Chester and Holyhead mail, and to whom, in consideration of his faithful and correct attention to his business, the Post-office has made a present of a scarlet coat on every anniversary of the King's birthday. His place was little more than exercise to him—getting on his box at Eccleshall, in Staffordshire, at a pleasant hour in the morning, and driving only to Lichfield, twenty-four miles. Here after taking his dinner, he met his down coach, and returned to Eccleshall in the evening. Taking advantage of his superior coachmanship, and the shortness of his stages—changing twice in his twenty-four miles—Dan was generally very indifferently horsed; but of all the men I ever saw upon a coach box, he had the best method of driving bad horses without punishing them; or, if I may be allowed the expression, of *coaxing* them along. I used to work a good deal upon this mail¹ some years back, and upon one occasion am enabled to speak

¹ Just to show what a change has taken place in the order of things within these last twenty years, I mention the following fact. I was once riding over Dan Herbert's ground, when his coach overtook me. I got on the box, and the guard rode my hack, behind the coach, for two stages! Were this to happen now the guard would be in the black book.

to the superiority of Dan on his coach box. I got up at Lichfield, and as we were approaching the town of Stafford he addressed me thus ; ‘ Now, Master, we shall give you a hot shirt over this next ground. My horses are bad enough at the best of times, but they have been out all night at Lord Bagot’s ball, with two rumbling gentlemen’s coaches at their tails, so they’ll be in nice tune for us.’ I have the team in my mind’s eye at this moment ; but suffice it to say, I got them about half their ground, when we were all done over together. Dan took hold of them, and made up the ground which I had lost, with very little punishment. This mail is two miles an hour a better coach than it was ; but in the days of my working upon it, the roads were in a miserable state—full a horse’s draught heavier than they are at present.

Dan Herbert, I am happy to say, is still at work, and those who have travelled with him, as well as all others who respect a good coachman, will be glad to hear the following account of him, which I had the other day from a friend, an excellent judge : ‘ Old Dan is alive, and hearty as ever. He is now, and has been for the last three years, driving the Chester and Liverpool mail, and I think I may say as much alive and as active as ever ; and, judging from a journey I went with him last year, I consider him better than ninety-nine out of a hundred coachmen you see ; and his age must be considerably above sixty. His son Tom, who lived with Mr. Cox, is now on the Liverpool and Chester coach, but is about to take to Mrs. Tomlinson’s business, the ‘ White Lion,’ at

Chester. Mrs. T. will be a great loss to the road, as she was full of life and spirit.'

I must here remark that, though perhaps not equal to him in neatness of execution, I consider the coachman I have been speaking of to have had an advantage over Jack Hale in his great command of temper. Although allowed by all judges to have been a beautiful coachman, Jack was not considered a good man with bad horses, being what is termed 'rather too quick for them.'

Before I quit the old ones, I must bring my brother whip and brother sportsman, Mr. Wise, late of the Southampton 'Union,' once more before the public. As a coachman, I cannot speak of him, having never sat beside him; but I, as well as many others, have been much¹ amused, not to say edified, by his discourse. I have an excellent anecdote of him now to produce, which was related to me a few weeks back by a gentleman who resides in this country. My friend's son had just been ordained Deacon, or, in the language of the day, 'ja-panned,' and the first time after entering upon his holy office that he got by the side of old Wise upon his coach-box, the following conversation took place:

Mr. Wise: 'Well, Mr. John, so you be got into orders.'

Young Divine: 'Why, yes, I am.'

¹ I shall not easily forget his definition of the *new and old coachman*, by the covert's side, the season before last, with Mr. Nicoll's hounds. There were two or three members of the Lower House present, who received a good lesson on the modern dialectic, and were highly entertained by it. Although there is a story of his once dropping his wheel rein and catching it on his toe, I never heard of Wise having an accident on the 'Union,' and I dare say he was equal to the old way of doing business.

Mr. Wise: 'All right; I am glad to hear it, for they tells me that's not quite so easy a job as it used to be. Now, I've known your father many years, and have drove you many a mile, and I want to ask you a bit of a favour: *Will you be so good as to explain to me a little bit about that there Trinity?*'

Young Divine: 'Why, that is not exactly a subject for a coach-box, Wise, and perhaps I might not make you comprehend it clearly without entering more fully into it.'

Mr. Wise: 'Why, to tell you the truth, sir, I have thought a good deal myself about that there Trinity, and never could understand it; but I don't know how it is, *I never meets three in a gig that I don't think of it!*'

I am not surprised at the propensity to make use of technical language by those who are daily employed in the same occupation or art, and can therefore easily reconcile the parallel between the Trinity and the gig. I had not a bad specimen of this about two years back, when addressing a coachman whom I had not seen for some years:

'How do you do, ——?'

'Quite well, thank ye, sir, glad to see you so well.'

'I am very well, I thank you, and very glad to see you *on so good a coach.*'

'Oh, sir, the coach is no great things.'

'Come, come! forty miles of night work, and no guard, can't be much amiss.'

'Why, sir, to be sure *we do make tongue and buckle meet*, and that's all.'

Another specimen of road lingo is to be found in the following story. A few years ago a certain baronet, very fond of the road, gave a wedding dinner to a coachman at his own house, and the description of the nuptial banquet, by one of his brother whips who was invited to the wedding, was as follows : ' I walks in as free as air. Hangs up my hat upon a peg behind the door. Sits myself down by the side of a young woman they calls a lady's maid, and gets as well acquainted with her in five minutes as if I had known her for seven year. When we goes to dinner we has a little soup to start with, and a dish of fish they calls trout, spotted for all the world like any coach dog. A loin of veal as white as halley-blasters, the kidney fat as big as the crown of my hat ; I ain't lying, so help me G— ! A couple of ducks stuffed with sage and inions, fit for any lord, and a pudding you might have drove a coach around. Sherry white, and red Port, more than did us good ; and at last we goes to tea. I turns my head short around, and sees Bill — making rather too free. Stop, says I, Bill, that won't do. Nothing won't do here but what's quite genteel.'

Horse-keepers are a useful body of men, and if they do their duty by their employers, their places are no sinecures. Some of their remarks while their coach is changing horses are by no means bad. I heard of the following remonstrance of one of them with his coachman a short time since : ' Why, coachman, now what's the use of your halways being a haltercating along with me. You knows that there mare won't go leader as well as I do, and yet you lays all that there job last night to me.'

Sir Henry Peyton told me that, wishing to pay him a compliment, he once told a coachman, that, although a little man, he thought him strong on his box. 'Why, Sir Henry,' replied Coachee, 'the truth is, what the big ones does by strength, I does by hartifiz.'¹

Among the moderns I must not omit nearly the most elegant coachman that this country ever saw, and this is Jack Moody, son of William Moody, so long known on the road. The last time I travelled with Jack Moody was between two and three years ago, when he was at work on the Exeter mail; since which time he has retired from public life in consequence of his health, and does a little in the horse-dealing business. He is quite an out-and-outer, and it is much to be regretted that so fine a performer should be obliged to leave the road. A friend of mine—a good judge—told me he saw him in the procession of the mails the last birthday but one, and that his appearance and execution on the box were as superior to the other coachmen as day is superior to night.

I must not pass over a very pretty light coachman by the name of Ball, who ~~is~~^{is} at work from Southampton to Oxford. He changed places—not being quite equal to the hard service—with Gentleman² Taylor, on the South-

¹ Artifice.

² My having given Taylor this title in a Letter on the Road, some time back, occasioned a humorous dialogue between us on his coach. He asked me if I knew who NIMROD was? Of course I did not. 'If I could find him out,' said he, 'I would bring an action against him.' 'For what?' I asked. '*For a libel, in calling me a gentleman!*' was his reply. 'Why, you keep gentlemen's company,' said I. 'To be sure,' added he, 'my passengers generally wear pretty good collars to their coats.'

ampton 'Telegraph,' about five years ago; and Mr. Charles Buxton tells me I should travel with a coachman by the name of *Pop*, on the Light Salisbury, as he thinks I should like him, and ere long I intend to do so. His father once hunted Mr. Chute's hounds. There is also a very prime artist on the Cheltenham 'Magnet,' by the name of James Witherington, alias *Bloody Femmy*. The latter title implies that he has been a bit of a *larker* in his time; and when on the Birmingham and Manchester 'Express,' he had like to have killed a whole coach-load at once, by galloping them round a corner, with a rum-mish team, and himself queer. For this job he was pulled up and paid 70*l.* towards doctors' bills, which with the help of a few more years over his head, has made him quite steady; and, as Black Will says, he now begins to see danger. He is a strong, powerful man, in the prime of life, and certainly one of the very best opposition coachmen of the present hour. I used to see a good deal of him when on the Worcester day coach, and have often been pleased to look at him taking a full load down Broadway hill without a wheel tied—sitting as much at his ease as if he were blowing a cloud. Jem Whitchurch is a loss to the road, being one of the quickest of the quick; and the ease with which he did his work—from Brighton to London, and back to Brighton every day—was a proof of his being a coachman. His breakfast, dinner, a glass of sherry, and an apple, was all the refreshment he partook of in his hundred miles of ground.

Doubtless the greatest instance of corporal exertion

on a coach-box that was ever yet heard of was, that modern Hercules, the celebrated Captain Barclay of Urie, driving the mail all the way from London to Edinburgh—four hundred miles. Thorogood's work on the Norwich 'Times,' already recorded, is a wonderful sample of perseverance and industry—having driven his coach *two years without missing one journey*, 112 miles a day.

There is a very respectable and scientific coachman in my own neighbourhood who deserves notice, inasmuch as *he only wants two years of completing his half century on the road*, and he is now as equal to his work as ever he was. His name is Mountain Shaw, a nephew of the coach-proprietor of that name; and he drives Monk's Basingstoke coach to London one day, and down the next. He has an uncommonly neat house in Basingstoke, where he is much respected; and I am told he is always to be found, on his London evenings, at a certain house near his yard, in the City, dressed in his silk stockings and white waistcoat, enjoying himself after the business of the day, and amusing his friends with his agreeable discourse. Shaw is very well known to several of the gentlemen dragsmen, and I humbly suggest that when he completes his half century on the road, they give him a jubilee dinner, in London, at which myself and several of my friends will be most happy to attend. Fifty years' faithful service to the public is entitled to some compliment—the nature of the service having little to do with it. As the Poet says :

Honour and shame from no condition rise ;
Act well your part—there all the honour lies.

There is another very excellent coachman at work through Basingstoke. *His* name is Ward, on the Exeter Subscription coach. No man understands heavy work better than Jackman, on the Old Salisbury ; and as he is a great favourite of his master (Mr. Fagg), I wonder he does not persuade him to shove the old coach along one mile an hour faster. His horses are, perhaps, unequalled for size and condition, and would be all the better for having something taken off their time, as it would take some of the flesh off their bones, of which they have quite too much at present.

My old friend John Probyn, late on Shackell's Reading coach, has left the box nearly three years. Like many others, he began by affecting a character, and finished by adopting it—making a first-rate coachman. It is pretty well known that Probyn is a member of one of the oldest families in the county of Gloucester, and heir to a large estate ; so that his taking professionally to the road was only a lark, and he has now resumed his place in society, having married a lady of excellent family in South Wales. He is a very powerful coachman ; and upon my asking a brother whip if he did not consider him a very good one, he answered in the affirmative, but added, with a significant shake of the head, 'Look at his cattle !' Now the fact is, that with his fast coach, he could not have paid him a greater compliment, for according to the old proverb, 'a bad carpenter never has good tools.'

In that amusing work 'Geoffrey Crayon's Sketchbook,' is to be found an attempt at the character of an English

coachman,¹ and it only fails from having been written by a foreigner who is not quite conversant with the peculiar language of the road. The description also would rather apply to coachmen of a day now gone by, as for the most part their appearance is much changed for the better ; and however appropriate the language—‘the broad full-face, curiously mottled with red, as if the blood had been forced by hard-feeding and frequent potations of malt liquors, into every vessel of the skin,’ it is not the present characteristic. The coachman of the present time, generally speaking, drinks nothing on the road ; is a very natty, spruce fellow, meaning nothing less than to imitate his superiors in his dress, and now and then rather too much disregarding the costume (when well appointed, a very becoming one) of his profession. Nothing, however, can be altogether more agreeable than the change ; as with it we have not only a surety for our lives, but passengers are not liable to have their ears molested by any improper language, or obscene jokes, which were rather too prevalent in the Old School.

Were I to get my bread by the sweat of my brow I would certainly be a coachman. Generally speaking (and where is the rose without the thorn ?) his occupation is a pleasant one. He is most commonly well paid ; he knows his hours of work, and when he has accomplished them he can enjoy himself in comfort. But this is not all. From the coachman to the waggoner

¹ See Chap. XVI. p. 84.

there is to each a charm that belongs peculiarly to the road, which cheers all who are on it. They have their favourite houses of call—they have the smile and good wishes of the people whose habitations they pass by, and many snug things besides known only to themselves. If a coachman is good-looking, or agreeable, it does not require a wise man to find out the many kind looks bestowed upon him from the windows of the towns he passes through. It is in his power also to be a sort of magnet to his coach; and, if he respects himself, no man in the middle career of life is more respected by others.

Philosophers tell us, that wit consists in quickly assembling our ideas, *and putting them together* in an instant. Now, as analogy is but the resemblance between things with regard to circumstances or effects, may there not exist something like analogy betwixt putting ideas together quickly, and putting four horses to a coach in sixty seconds of time? Certain, however, is it that, as far as my observation has led me, the faster the coach the more sharp and ready is the coachman with all his remarks and replies. Time, it must be admitted, will not allow him to be verbose; but several fast coachmen of the present day have a happy knack of compressing into a small compass whatever they may have to say, that would not disgrace the best rhetorician of the age. One of the most agreeable evenings I ever passed in my life was in the society of Gentleman Taylor of the Southampton 'Telegraph,' who, exclusive of his excellent singing, kept the table in a roar by the many sharp things he

said. The circumstance of our meeting him was as follows : I made one of a party to Southampton last year, on a driving friend's coach, to dine with Billy Lynn ;¹ and as we were all fond of the road, Taylor was invited to meet us. It so happened that as Billy was just returned from a three-months cruise on board the different yachts, his lingo, in consequence, was all *nautical*, and this gave birth to some most amusing dialogues between himself and Taylor. To relate them all would exceed my limits ; but when *coupling together coach-horses* became the subject of our discourse, I thought it would have been the death of some of us when we heard Billy asking the coachman how he *braced up* his leaders ? I have also been in the company of Peer, who drives the 'Telegraph' over the upper ground. He is an excellent companion, and sings 'Sweet Poll of Portsea and Joe the Marine' in the very best style.

Billy Lynn's speaking of 'bracing up' his leaders reminds me of an anecdote of Peer, which shows how prone we are to form our ideas, as well as to express them, by the rule of practice, and in reference to our favourite pursuits. As I was riding one day by the side of him on his box, we met a wretch in the shape of a dandy, with his hair sticking out at least a foot from his

¹ My friends assure me *I must* take this liberty with Mr. Lynn's name, for were I to call him by any other it would be styled a misnomer. That of 'Billy Lynn' is a passport to everything sociable and what ought to be enjoyed in this world ; and when we look in his face, we may say with Shakespeare—

'Some jovial star reigned at your birth.'

hat. 'D——n that fellow!' said Peer, 'how I should like to put the twitch on him and pull his mane.'

Notwithstanding the innuendos and sneers—natural enough, I admit—of those connected with the press, as well as others, which were directed against gentlemen-coachmen and the different driving clubs, it is to them that the public are mainly indebted for the present excellent state of the roads, and the safe and expeditious travelling. This taste for the road produced an intercourse between gentlemen of rank and property and those connected with it, which has been productive of the happiest results. The persons concerned with the operative part of the ~~business~~—that is to say, road makers, and others having the care of roads, if they have not acted immediately under the directions of these amateurs, have been very greatly benefited by their advance—doubly valuable, as proceeding from their knowledge of what a road ought to be. Let us look at the exertions of Sir Henry Parnell, on the great Holyhead road. Would the worthy Baronet ever have exerted himself with such effect, had he not possessed a knowledge of coaching and everything belonging to the working of a coach, as perfectly as he is known to do? Let us also look at what Mr. Kenyon, of Pradoc, has done on the same road. I remember—and I have driven it a hundred times ~~both~~ by day and by night—the stage between Shrewsbury and Oswestry (eighteen miles) to be as bad a one as a coach ever travelled over. Part of it was a bed of sand, and there were grips and water-courses on it that were quite dangerous for blind horses, or for night-work.

Being immediately under Mr. Kenyon's eye—long before Mr. M'Adam was heard of in those parts—he set about improving it. He had the water-courses covered over, and, by degrees, the sandy part was all faced with hard materials, and made nearly as good for a coach as it is now. Neither is this all. As I said before, the intercourse that has lately been carried on between proprietors of inns and of coaches, and gentlemen fond of road-work, has greatly tended to direct the attention of the former to the accommodation and comforts of travellers: and the notice taken by gentlemen of coachmen who conduct themselves well, has worked the reformation we have of late years witnessed in that useful part of the community. I shall return to this subject presently.

Generally speaking, coachmen are clean and neat in their persons. They plume themselves, as Geoffrey Crayon says, on having a good bit of broad cloth, a clean pair of boots, a well-brushed hat, and good tie to the cravat. This attention to their appearance never fails to have its reward, and particularly among the female part of the creation, who, I think, are generally well disposed towards coachmen—probably on account of the hardships and risks they endure on the road. Coach-proprietors also are well aware how much a well-dressed and civil servant adds to the amount of the way-bill.

To such perfection is coaching advanced, that not only are noblemen and gentlemen of the first respectability now to be met with on the outside¹ of our fast coaches,

¹ Despite of the alarms of Mr. John Lawrence that the market will be overstocked with anecdote, I promise to introduce one if I think it may

but ladies of fashion are occasionally to be seen inside them. I was surprised a few years ago by meeting a lady of family and fortune at Bath, who told me she had come thither from Cheltenham in a coach. 'In a coach!' said I; 'what coach?' 'By Captain Watson's coach,' she replied; 'I took places for myself and maid inside, and one for my man servant out, and travelled as comfortably as I should have done in my own carriage, and at half the expense. Everyone patronises Captain Watson's coach.' The ladies, we know, are partial to the red coat, and those who have a *penchant* for a black one will find an excellent coachman in that toggerly on the Bath and London road by the name of Dennis, who, my readers will remember, had the misfortune to have a

amuse your readers :—About fifteen years ago, a certain noble earl, a very intimate friend of mine, and very fond of the road, had been on a visit to the Marquis of Bath, and was taking a lark one night on one of the Bath coaches. When they arrived at Marlborough his lordship thought he could not do less than perform the honours of the supper table, and a lady being of the party, of course he paid her the first compliment. 'Will you allow me to send you some beef?' said my noble friend. *No answer!* 'Permit me, madam, to help you to some beef,' repeated his lordship. *No answer!* Once more, and a little louder, 'Shall I send you any beef?' 'I NEVER SPEAK TO OUTSIDE PASSENGERS!' said the lady, with a contemptuous toss of her head. The noble earl rang the bell, and told the waiter to send his master into the room, when the following *eclaircissement* took place, to the great dismay of the fastidious lady.

My Lord: 'Oh, Mr. —, order me a little supper at another table, as I find I am unworthy of a seat at this!'

Landlord: 'God bless me, my Lord! is your Lordship here? I am sure I did not know it. Here, waiter!—I hope your Lordship left all the family well at Longleat.' To make the story short, my noble friend ate his supper comfortably, and after taking his 'allowance,' resumed the box, and drove as far as his coachman went. To keep up the joke, he opened the coach door to kick the passengers for the coachman, when the old lady, as if wishing to atone for her folly, put five shillings into his hand!

thigh broken last winter by the upsetting of his coach in the town of Brentford.

The occupation of a coachman is, generally speaking, a very healthy one. In the Old School, nothing could have preserved their lives to any tolerably long period but the bracing effects on the constitution of passing rapidly through the air. They are for the most part of robust frames—the exercise on the box not being sufficient to keep down their flesh when at all inclined to feed. Those who wish to keep themselves light take walking exercise in their hours of rest from their road work. Although their pursuits are various, almost all of them are well inclined towards our different kinds of sporting, particularly the ring ; many among the upper order are much attached to the drama, and some of the swells are often to be seen at the London theatres, very well dressed, with a bit of nice muslin by their side. The service of the coach-box, however, is apt to be injurious to the eyes—particularly so in very cold blowing weather. A coachman must keep his eye forward, and I have tried it, and found that the sight cannot be fixed upon anything beyond the heads of the wheel horses *without raising the eyelid* (and not so far as this with short men), and consequently exposing the eye to the weather. Six parts of cold spring water to one of French brandy is the best lotion that can be used when the eyes suffer from weather.

Medical men are not averse to coachmen taking a fair allowance of vinous or spirituous liquors in very cold weather, sufficient, as they say, to keep out the weather ;

or, in other words, to promote the circulation of the blood.¹ Although they recommend them to preserve their feet and bodies from cold, they are no advocates for their lapping up their necks with large shawl handkerchiefs; but, on the contrary, they attribute the illness and death of many of them to this cause alone. In cold weather the chin should be protected by a thin shawl, and the knees by good thick cloth knee-caps. Leather waistcoats are excellent preventives of rheumatism, and in very severe weather the breast should be doubly protected, for which purpose hare-skins are now manufactured, and getting much into use on the road. The leather waistcoat is very strongly recommended, as not being porous, and therefore warm. It is also asserted, but I have never tried it, that a sheet of brown paper worn over the breast is preferable to either. The recipe is simple and cheap.

THE B. D. C., AND FOUR-HORSE CLUB.

Having mentioned the Driving Clubs as contributing so effectually to the improvements in roads and travelling, I proceed to a little account of their origin and proceedings.

The B. D. C. or *Benson Driving Club*, was instituted on February 28, 1807, consisting of twenty-five members elected by ballot. There is no annual subscription, but

¹ To be effectual, take it 'cold with.'—ED.

each member pays the sum of ten pounds on his admission. Since its establishment, the Club has, of course lost several members by death; but at present it is nearly full, and the following is a correct list :—

Sir Henry Peyton.

Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Henry Villebois.

Mr. Okeover.

Colonel Hamilton.

Mr. Warde.

Colonel Sewell.

Mr. Thornhill.

Mr. Bunbury.

Mr. Prouse.

Mr. Spicer.

Mr. Maxse.

Mr. Petre.

Sir Bellingham Graham.

Marquis of Worcester.

Colonel Clements, 18th Hussars.

Sir Andrew Barnard.

Mr. Blake.

Mr. John Walker.

Mr. H. Wombwell.

The Honourable H. Scott.

Mr. Charles Jones.

Lord Anson.

Mr. Applethwaite.

For sixteen years after this club was established, the members met two days in the year at the White Hart Inn, at Benson, in Oxfordshire, and two at the Black Dog, at Bedfont, fourteen miles from London, on the Great Western Road; but since the year 1823, they have confined themselves entirely to Bedfont, it being a more convenient distance from London. In all, there have been seventy-six meetings of the B. D. C., and the anniversary is held on February 28. No strangers are admitted.

I will proceed to some notice of the different members. Of Sir Henry Peyton little need be said. As a coachman he is as well known as any man upon the road, and

his opinion is held in high esteem. His colour has always been grey, and his stable generally consists of ten coach horses. His pace is not fast, but it is well calculated to see horses work, and his are beautifully put together. I saw him pull back his team last spring in a crowd in London, and every rein told as true as if it had been single. He works regularly, summer and winter, though occasionally some of his coach horses are out in the latter season. He has, however, always one team up in the winter, and he often brings a load of sportsmen to the covert's side. From his house to Oxford—eighteen miles,—is his favourite ground, and it is a good hard road for wheels. Sir Henry first introduced the ornaments, the cap and the thumb-ferrel, on the four-horse whips, which we now generally see in the hands of our swell coachmen. That he may long live to enjoy his favourite amusements, is the wish of every man who knows him. Mr. Algernon Peyton, the Baronet's brother, is a very capital coachman, but he has not had a team for some years—perhaps, not thinking it consistent with the fine church preferment he is in possession of. He was very good on the box when at Cambridge, and worked much on the road, which is the only education for a coachman. Gentleman's work, alone, will never do.

‘No man in England’ is better horsed than Mr. Harrison, of Shelswell in Oxfordshire, and he is a very good coachman. His colour is brown; and when I inform my readers that he will go as far as three hundred guineas for a coach horse the tale is told. His pace is quick, and his team can generally give most

others the go-by, when their coachman gives them the office. I am sorry to say Mr. Harrison's health has not been quite good of late years, which accounts for our not seeing him on the road so often as we could wish. His turn-out is very prime.

Mr. Henry Villebois is younger brother to the gentleman of that name who keeps a pack of fox-hounds in Hampshire. He is a great agriculturist, and, having no regular team at present, is not often at work ; but he is a very pretty coachman.

Mr. Okeover is well known upon the road, and a coachman of some standing. He is considered very good, but not often to be seen now on his own coach-box. Colonel Hamilton is in the Guards—very fond of the road, but in no great practice.

Mr. Warde¹ is almost too well known to require a single line ; but when he is the theme, I cannot put down my pen, he being certain to furnish me with something amusing. He is a coachman of at least fifty years' standing ; and from having been always used to heavy work, knows his business well. As I before said, he worked a great deal on the Birmingham and Shrewsbury 'Old Prince,' and the heavy 'Gloucester ;' and having, like myself, often had the sole charge of the coach, he is pretty well awake to most things. I have to record one feat performed by him, which has not often been exceeded, as far as personal exertion goes :—He drove the heavy 'Gloucester' from London to that town, one hundred

¹ The Father of Foxhunting ; fifty-two years an M.F.H.—EDITOR.

and ten miles ; and after taking some refreshment he turned back, and drove it into London. In those days there was no guard on this coach ; so that, what with locking and unlocking wheels, and the regular business on the road, he had quite enough to do, having no one to help him.

Although a good coachman, Mr. Warde, like most of the old ones, is not without his fancies. He will not hear of the long wheel-rein, neither will he bear up his horses. His cattle, however, are of the steady sort, and generally more calculated for strength than speed. He has also another peculiarity in his coaching system. He thinks baiting horses on a journey does them more harm than good, therefore never stops them in their day's work, unless to wash out their mouths. When he hunted Northamptonshire, he always drove the same team to London in a day, the distance being full sixty miles. He still adheres to the same plan.

My readers will be glad to hear that Mr. Warde is not going to leave the road. He told me, a few weeks back, that he had reserved a team out of his hunters, and that he should soon be at work again. His present drag is rather of the funny order. It is a gig upon very high wheels, and an outrigger on the *near* side. As it is customary to put a horse of this description on the *off* side, I asked him his reason for changing his place, when he gave me two reasons for doing so. 'First,' said he, 'when you meet another carriage, he is not in the way ; and secondly, if he should take to kicking, he hits your man, and not you.' — 'Good,' said I.

The sporting world must also be rejoiced to hear that Mr. Warde has quite recovered from his late illness, and is looking fresh and well. His spirits, however, never forsook him, and when at his worst he had always a joke for a friend. I called upon him one day in London to ask him how he did. 'Oh,' said he, 'I am as well as any man can be, who is allowed to drink nothing but lemonade and soda water; but my stomach thinks my throat is cut.' He did not, as usual, make one of us at Mr. Tattersall's dinner, the Sunday before last Epsom races; but 'Next year,' said he, 'I'll come to you, and eat and drink for two.'

Mr. Warde scarcely ever misses a dinner at the B. D. C., and if he do not take a team of his own, he is always to be seen on Sir Bellingham Graham's box, and it is needless to say that he adds greatly to the pleasure and jollity of the evening. He has, of course, several good anecdotes of the performances of the B. D. C., many of the members of which he might almost consider as his children. It happened at one meeting that he did not go down the road either with his own team or Sir Bellingham's, but with another friend, who must be nameless. The evening had been a merry one; and both himself and his brother dragsman—in the language of the road were—*sprung*. As he mounted the box, his friend addressed him thus: 'My horses have but two paces by lamplight—a walk and a gallop—which will you have?'—'Oh, a gallop, by all means,' answered Mr. Warde. 'Now where do you think we pulled up?' continued he; 'why, *between the two last horses of an eight-*

horse Exeter waggon.' It happened one night that his Majesty changed horses at Bedfont, soon after the Club had dined. On being informed that his carriage was at the door, they drank his health with three times three. The King shortly afterwards saw one of the party at Court, and acknowledged the compliment paid to him. 'Was not old John Warde among you?' said his Majesty. On being answered in the affirmative, he replied, that *he thought he knew his halloo.*

Of Colonel Sewell I have seen nothing for some years past, having been much abroad—in India, I believe—but he is good on the box; and Mr. Bunbury has no team now. He had four clever chesnuts. I never saw Mr. Thornhill at work, so can say nothing of him on the bench.

The next member of the B. D. C. of whom I am enabled to say anything, is that well-known coachman, Mr. Prouse—also one of the Old School, and a very entertaining companion. His scene of action has been chiefly confined to the Great Western Road, on which, at one time, he worked almost as much as any regular man. In the evening he is a good bit of company. After five bottles of hock, which he could put under his waistcoat at a sitting without the smallest inconvenience, he has often been seen to fill a bumper, and place the glass on his head during the time he would sing a song, in which not only every coachman's, but every horse-keeper's name between London and Plymouth was introduced. At the same time also, he would go through the manœuvres of hitting wheeler and leader, without

spilling a drop of his wine ; and after he had drunk it off, he would run the empty glass up and down the large silver buttons on his coat, with very singular effect.

Mr. Prouse has seldom been without a team of his own, and, though I have often seen him at work, I cannot say much in honour of his turn-out. His steeds did not look as if they were ' begotten of the wind ' ; but he always preferred heavy work—perhaps because he is a heavy man. He is now become the possessor of a fine estate in Gloucestershire, lately the property of an old friend of mine, now deceased, but I fear he is getting slack on the coach-box.

Mr. Prouse is a warm admirer of the road, and, in the spring of the year, is generally to be seen leaning his back against the window of the carpet-shop in Piccadilly, whence he can see all the coaches that are leaving town by way of Hyde Park Corner. Numerous anecdotes are related of him, amongst which is the following—pretty strong of ' the ruling passion ' : He was dining one day in a party, when the French Revolution became the subject of conversation. Listening to all that was said without making any remark, Mr. Prouse at length took a letter from his pocket, and addressed his company thus : ' Don't talk to me about your French Revolution. Here's Bill Simmons, the first man that ever drove the Bristol mail out of Bristol, d—n me, if they haven't turned him over to the heavy coach. *Now that's what I call a revolution !* '

Mr. Spicer always has a team. He is allowed to be a very good hand and excellent judge ; but Mr. Maxse

is what we call 'on the shelf.' The latter gentleman, however, gives a good reason for quitting the coach-box. 'I hunt in Leicestershire,' says he, 'all winter, and all summer I am in my yacht, so that I have no time to drive.' I have been by the side of Mr. Maxse, and consider him a very good workman.

Mr. Petre is known by having driven a coach, nearly a *facsimile* of our mails, and he is never without a team. He has a large property in Lancashire, and was a member of the Old Club at Melton.

Of Sir Bellingham Graham as a coachman I have already spoken, and he stands very high in the list of good ones. His coach-horse stables in London are well worth seeing, as everything belonging to the drag is kept in apple-pie order, and he has always a strong stock of cattle. He has been for some time out of conceit with large horses, being of opinion that about fifteen hands one or two inches, with substance and action, is about the stamp for light work in harness.

The Marquis of Worcester is becoming a coachman of some standing and considerable experience, as, exclusive of his own horses, he works a good deal on the road. His favourite coaches are the Southampton 'Telegraph' and the Oxford 'Defiance,' and here his lordship shows his taste. As for Peer, on the former, I have no hesitation in saying that he is *peerless*—or, like Hunt's blacking, matchless; and Thomas on the 'Defiance' is very good.

Of Colonel Clements I can say but little, never having seen him at work. He was, I believe, a long time in the 18th Hussars, and generally has a team. Neither did I

ever see Sir Andrew Barnard on the bench, but he is very fond of the thing, and is what the world calls 'a capital fellow.' He has been a good deal at work in another line, with his Grace the Duke of Wellington in the field of battle. Mr. Blake also has been some time abroad, but is a very neat coachman.

Mr. John Walker is well known to the public as having horsed and driven a Bognor coach for the period of nearly two years. His brother, Mr. Richard Walker, of Mitchel Grove (once the property of Sir John Shelley, and pronounced by the late King to be the best house in England), also horsed the same coach one side of the ground, but did not drive it, and they had separate stables and different changes on the road. This lark, however, did not last two years, I conclude for the best of reasons. All those acquainted with coaching are aware that, where the returns are limited, expenses¹ must be limited also, and that all above forty pounds given for coach horses is seldom seen again, as, upon the average, they do not last to work it out. Messrs. Walkers' Bognor coaches, however, were worked in most superior style, and it is allowed on all hands that they set the example of neatness and comfort to many others. Their outside seats were all furnished with easy cushions for passengers to sit upon, and the hoops of the box and the roof-irons padded, so as not to hurt their hips. All this, however, would not do. A coach is but a coach after all, and, unless the sixpences be turned into ninepences,

¹ There was also a strong opposition to contend with from the Golden Cross, and the Ship, Charing Cross.

it will not do for one proprietor to give sixty guineas for a horse, whilst his opponent gives but forty. Such, however, I have reason to believe, was a good deal the case with the two Messrs. Walker, and such was one of the causes of their putting down their coaches. Their stock was sold by the hammer last winter for pretty good prices, and, when I was with Sir Bellingham Graham in Shropshire, Mr. John Walker made him a present of a favourite leader, by way of a keepsake from an old friend.

Mr. John Walker, who drove his own coach (a neat little coachman by the name of Butcher driving his brother's) is nothing less than a beautiful coachman, with the benefit of much experience to boot. He puts a horse to a coach in a particularly neat manner, and can drive him as well as most of the best of them when he gets him there. He has now a team of his own, and has taken to hunting again, having been last season in Warwickshire. He once had the Hambledon country, where he was considered a good sportsman; and his elder brother is well established as a judicious breeder of race horses, having produced Longwaist, a winner of the Oaks, &c. &c.

Of Mr. H. Wombwell and the Hon. H. Scott I can say nothing, never having seen them on a coach-box; but Mr. Charles Jones (brother to Sir Tyrwhitt) is a very neat performer, and quite in love with road work. Like the Walkers, he had a bit of a turn in the public line: but his lark did not last long. He horsed and drove the Brighton 'Monarch' coach for a few months

only. Mr. Sumner, son of the late member for Surrey, was a member of this Club, but has resigned, and his place is filled up by Lord Anson. Having never seen his lordship at work, I cannot speak of his merits or demerits in this line. Mr. Applethwaite was also elected last year. The Hon. Thomas Kenyon, Mr. Whitmore, of Apley Castle, in Shropshire, and Lord Southampton, were for several years members of this Club.

The B. D. C. has been very liberal of its services in behalf of such coachmen, of good character, who from accident or illness have stood in need of pecuniary assistance.¹ The number of members who now have teams at work does not exceed twelve.

Very shortly after the establishment of the B. D. C., another Coaching Club was formed under the auspices of that long-established and very scientific coachman, Mr. Charles Buxton. This has been erroneously called the Whip Club, as also the Four-in-hand Club; but its real title was the Four-Horse Club. Their first meeting was held in April 1808, and they met every first and third Thursday in May, and the same in June, at the house of their President in Cavendish Square, and drove to Salt Hill to dinner. They dined alternately at the 'Windmill' and the 'Castle,' and each house took in the horses which the other could not accommodate. Mr. Buxton, if present,

¹ A friend of mine, to whom I wrote to know if he were now a member of this Club, replied in the following words :—' I am not now a member of the B.D.C., but was for several years ; and I can truly say, I never saw more good fellowship and friendship amongst any set of men than existed among them. They annually relieved several coachmen who were in distress, and were the chief means of establishing the Benevolent Club, which I hope will long continue to prosper.'

always presided at the dinner table; and Sir John Rogers, vice. If these members were absent, the late Lord Hawke, and his brother, Mr. Martin Hawke, acted for them. Two guineas a head cleared all expenses, save horses, to the *bona-fide* members; and three guineas were charged to those who were honorary ones. As no strangers were admitted, I can only repeat what I have heard—namely, that the utmost good-fellowship prevailed at those periodical meetings, and from the present number of teams now going in the neighbourhood of London—upwards of thirty—it is a matter of surprise that the Club is not renewed.

The procession of this Club in Cavendish Square was perhaps objectionable, as making unnecessary parade; and the B. D. C. managed the matter better; but the going down the road was good. Luncheon for thirty was always set out at the 'Packhorse' at Turnham Green, with cider cup, made with hock and burrage; and the same at the 'Magpies' on Hounslow Heath, eight miles farther down the road. Here also the horses were watered, but they ran the ground to Salt Hill, and back the next day, without being taken out of their harness—the distance, twenty-four miles from Cavendish Square. The number of teams generally amounted to about a dozen—each dragsman having an honorary member on his bench.

During the period of this Club, my Lord Sefton was at work, and better horsed, perhaps, than any other man in England. His Lordship neither belonged to this, nor to the B. D. C., but he was frequently in the habit of going

down the road on the days of the Four-Horse Club Meetings, and used to amuse himself with giving them the go-by whenever he thought proper. It was vain to contend with him, as he was quite too fast for any of them. I often regret that Lord Sefton has taken off his bars, for we have lost one of our first-rate artists.

I only recollect the following members of the Four-Horse Club, but perhaps some of your correspondents will favour me by adding to the list :—

Mr. Buxton. This gentleman is, as I before mentioned, very scientific, and supposed to be the best hand at breaking in young ones, and putting them well into harness, of anyone going. His experience is great. The bit which takes its name from him, and is called the Buxton bit, has much merit. Exclusive of other advantages, it is a preventive of a horse getting the cheek into his mouth, when he becomes nearly unmanageable. The late Lord Hawke was a fair coachman, and had excellent taste in harness and carriages.¹ His head-terret has been generally adopted.

Sir Felix Agar is a beautiful light coachman, and distinguished by a certainly hitherto-unrivalled exploit on the bench. He drove his coach for a wager, in and out of, and around the 'Fox,' in Messrs. Tattersall's yard, *in a trot*. The bet was a dinner to a large party, and the bettor on the other side of the question was Mr. Ackers, who of course had the piper to pay. If either

¹ Lord Foley was at work a good deal in these days, and was remarkable for the neatness of his turn-out. I have at this time the receipt of Lord Sefton's coachman for blacking leather—the best I ever met with. Patent leather for pads and wipers was not known at this period.

horse had dropped into a walk, the wager would have been lost; and it is wonderful this had not happened, when we consider the small space allowed the horses to turn in. Sir Felix did it with the short wheel-rein and no breeching. Sir Bellingham Graham was also one of this Club, as was Sir Godfrey Webster; and Mr. Martin Hawke, clever at anything he undertook; Mr. M'Quin; Mr. Humphrey Butler—the latter very fair on the box, and capital over the mahogany—chanting in the best style, and the evening never too long for himself or his company. Mr. Ackers is a coachman of great experience for his years, having never been without a team since he started in life. I have travelled some thousands of miles with him, and never saw him in a scrape. He is capitally horsed at this time, and has just taken Sir Francis Burdett's fine place at Ramsbury, for the purpose of being near the Bath road. Mr. Ackers is a good judge of a carriage, and showed me an excellent improvement the other day in his coach. His sway bar is made to turn in a groove, so that in case of his perch-bolt wearing smaller—which it will do on gravel roads, by the friction of the gritty substances that get into the bolt-hole—the fore-bed does not feel the effects of it, and therefore the pole is quite steady in the futchells, which cannot be the case when the perch-bolt wears.

Mr. M'Quin, Captain Murray, Mr. Sherrard, Major Pellew, Lord Clinton, Mr. Paul Methuen, Sir John Johnstone, Mr. Harrison, Sir John Broughton, Sir Charles Bamfylde, Mr. Osbaldeston, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Stephen Atkinson were also members of this Club, but

I cannot speak to their performance as coachmen. I have heard that Mr. Atkinson could drive four horses well. Mr. Osbaldeston's yellow coach—the original 'Canary'—we all must remember; as also the late Sir Charles Bamfylde and his roans; but Sir Charles's pace was much too slow for these times.

The pace, however, of gentlemen, as of all road work, has greatly increased since the period I have been speaking of, and a still greater change has taken place in the kind of horse. The coach horse of the present day, for anything but a six-inside coach, is a well-bred, thick horse, of moderate size, who, though he may not make so grand an appearance, when standing still, as those of loftier figure, yet can run his ground from end to end without a slack trace, and beat the big ones into fits.

Although I have been completely at a loss to reconcile the unbounded honours bestowed by the ancients upon those who could turn a corner neatly in their chariots at the Olympic games (and, with the exception of the nerve¹ required to force their way through the crowd, in this did their chief merit consist), yet I am quite convinced that great benefit arises to the community from associations such as those I have been describing. Leaving out of question the previous advantages that I have recorded, relating to roads and travellers, which have clearly sprung from this source, the good to trade is a great consideration. The common expenses of a gentleman's driving establishment are

¹ According to Pindar forty chariots have been broken in one race, and Sophocles calls it 'a shipwreck by land.'

calculated at twelve hundred per annum, if he does the thing as it should be; but where there is a strong spirit of rivalry, a great deal more. This is not all: the constant circulation of money on the road does a great deal of good; and the probability is, that if there were not this strong temptation to spend it here, it might either be taken out of the country, or left in some gambling house in London. Nor indeed can there be a much more rational way of spending it by those who have it to spend. What can be more pleasant than the use many gentlemen make of their teams in the London season? Instead of stewing in the streets, or going through the same dull round of the Park, they drive their friends, male and female, a few miles into the country to dinner, and return in the evening—if they wish it—in time for the Opera, or any engagements they may have. Richmond is one grand rendezvous on these occasions, and Greenwich—to eat white-bait—another; to each of which I have accompanied many pleasant parties. To prove, however, that the taste for this species of amusement is not much on the decline, I subjoin a list of no less than forty-six gentlemen who have teams, or who, in more technical language, are *now at work*.

Sir Henry Peyton.

Mr. Annesley.

Mr. Harrison.

Sir Bellingham Graham.

Mr. Ackers.

Mr. Cox.

Honourable Fitzroy Stanhope.¹

¹ Mr. Fitzroy Stanhope is one of the best gentlemen coachmen we have, a first-rate man on his box, and an excellent judge of everything belonging to a carriage. Messrs. Wright and Powell have just turned him out one of

Honourable Lincoln Stanhope.¹

Honourable Leicester Stanhope.

Mr. Arnold.²

Mr. Payne (of Sulby).³

Mr. Loveborne.

Mr. Petre.⁴

Lord Harborough.⁵

Lord Muncaster.

Mr. Congreve.

Mr. Smith Barry.⁶

Mr. Fletcher.⁷

Lord Clonmel.⁸

Sir John Broughton.⁹

Lord Belgrave.

Mr. Paulett.

Mr. John Walker.

Mr. Applethwaite.¹⁰

Colonel Berkeley.

Mr. Warde.

Mr. Wadham Wyndham.¹¹

the best road coaches I ever saw, and finished in superior style. They have also just completed a carriage called a *britchka* for his brother, the Honourable Leicester Stanhope, the construction of which is most curious. By the movement of different parts of the body, it forms an agreeable open carriage by day, and a convenient bedchamber by night.

¹ Mr. Lincoln Stanhope is in the 17th Light Dragoons, and has been several years in India, so it is not in my power to speak to his performance on the road.

² Mr. Arnold was in the Blues, and used to work a good deal on the Windsor coaches, but I have not seen him at work of late years.

³ Mr. Payne's turn-out is very good. His horses are well-bred and neat, but generally too bare of flesh for coach horses.

⁴ Mr. Petre drives a coach like a mail, and is pretty well horsed.

⁵ Lord Harborough drives nothing that cannot trot fourteen miles an hour.

⁶ Mr. Smith Barry has a very neat team of greys, which he has driven seven years, and he is a very steady coachman. His coachman is one of the most careful and experienced servants, in his line, I ever met with; and, for cleanliness and preservation of his master's property, an example to all others.

⁷ Mr. Fletcher resides near Southampton, and also drives greys.

⁸ Lord Clonmel is become a steady good coachman.

⁹ Sir John Broughton is never without a team, and knows his business well.

¹⁰ Mr. Applethwaite was elected a member of the B.D.C. last year, and has a neat team of greys.

¹¹ Mr. Wadham Wyndham resides in Wilts, and was elected a member of the B.D.C. at the same time as Mr. Applethwaite.

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Colonel Clements. | Mr. Spicer. |
| Mr. St. George Caulfield. ¹ | Lord Anson. |
| Sir Laurence Palk. ² | Honourable Thomas Kenyon. |
| Sir John Rogers. | Mr. Musgrave. ⁷ |
| Mr. Holyoake. ³ | Mr. Russell. ⁸ |
| Mr. Dolphin. ⁴ | Colonel Allen. |
| Mr. Henry Wormwald. ⁵ | Mr. Allen. ⁹ |
| Mr. Stevenson. ⁶ | |

¹ Mr. St. George Caulfield turns out in tip-top style, but is at present young in the art.

² Sir Laurence Palk, an experienced coachman for his age, and esteemed a very pretty workman.

³ Mr. Holyoake drives, as he rides, with rare nerve, and can put them pretty well together. He sold his greys last winter to Mr. Russell for 300 guineas, but soon replaced them.

⁴ Mr. Dolphin has got what may be termed the grandest team of horses now going, though not the cut of the present day. They are as handy as a fiddle, and well they may be ; for Sir Bellingham Graham drove them four years before Mr. Dolphin purchased them. They are fancy colours, and Mr. Dolphin told me he would give 200 guineas for a match horse to either of them. They are wonderfully fresh on their legs for their age, and as fat as Shrewsbury brawn. Mr. Dolphin is devoted to the box, and a very fair workman.

⁵ Mr. Henry Wormwald resides at Ainderby, near Northallerton in Yorkshire, and is much attached to the road.

⁶ Mr. Stevenson has only lately left Cambridge University, but he took a good degree in our line, and is considered a very promising coachman.

⁷ Mr. Musgrave, younger brother to Sir Philip Musgrave. He has a beautiful new coach just turned out.

⁸ Mr. Russell has two teams, and might have as many as King Solomon himself if he were so inclined ; for he has nothing to do but to dig for the needful. I saw the finest coach dog in his stables last spring that ever came under my observation. Mr. Russell is fond of the road, and wishes to become a coachman.

⁹ [This gentleman, an excellent dragsman, who was in the habit of driving many hundred miles in the year, shod his coach-horses with a tip, only having the heel on the ground. To show how quick he was on the box, one day starting out of a yard the near horse's off roller-bolt broke ; calling his man, he at once told him to put the near-wheeler's off-trace over the off-wheeler's near roller-bolt ! Having chain ends to his traces this was easily done.—ED.]

Mr. Christmas.

Mr. Claggett.

Mr. Langston.

Colonel Sibthorpe.¹

N.B. Those gentlemen on whom I have here made no remarks, are either so well-known as dragsmen of the first class that nothing requires to be said, or they are only known to me by name.

ON ACCIDENTS.

So long as coaches run, there will and must be accidents, but I am quite prepared to show that ninety out of a hundred are the effect of carelessness. I profess no superior skill, but, barring the breaking of an axletree or reins—and in the latter case this can generally be traced to carelessness—I think that, in the present state of the road, I could drive a coach for half a century, and not throw her over. I have worked a great deal, both by night and by day, but never saw an accident with a coach any further than a horse falling down or breaking a leg, and I can only recollect two or three instances of this sort. Let us look at some of the late fatal mishaps that have occurred on the road. The Stroudwater coachman knew he had a hill to go down which required the wheel to be tied. What did he? Why, he never attempted to pull up his coach till she began to descend the hill, and then, from the great weight that was in her, his horses

¹ M.P. for Lincolnshire. Colonel Sibthorpe drives nothing but greys, and purchases every grey horse likely to come in with his others, that is bred in his neighbourhood.

could not hold her back, and away she went, and killed an outside passenger. What did Phillips, the coachman of the 'Stamford,' do? He saw a waggon going down a hill before him, and, instead of collecting his horses some distance before he got to it, he trusted to its getting out of his way just when he wished: it did not get out of his way in time, and he was killed on the spot. The Liverpool mail was left in the street with only one man at the heads of the horses: they ran away, and the proprietors paid 350*l.* for the damages sustained. The same thing happened the other day to the York 'Highflyer' and the Ewel coach. Of this description of accidents there have been several of late years, and they must happen if horses are left in such a situation. I will defy the strongest man in England to control four horses when he is standing on the ground, if they are inclined to break away. This reminds me of a very singular occurrence some years back with the Chester and Manchester mail. At this period the roads between those towns were paved. The person who horsed the mails being of opinion that a unicorn or pick-axe team was better over that sort of ground than four horses (the leaders being apt to contend for the middle of the pavement, which was narrow, and occasionally pushed each other off it), such was the team always used. About four miles from Chester the guard and coachman went into a house to wash their mouths out, leaving the horses in charge of a man, from whom, however, they bolted, and pursued their road to Chester. I happened to be staying there at the time, and went to see the mail come in. It was a dark, tempestuous night,

and the lamps were lit ; but the old grey leader brought his coach down a narrow street, and turned an awkward corner in grand style, stopping at the Post Office as usual. Seeing a crowd collect about the coach, the passengers began to enquire what the matter was, not having been previously aware of their alarming situation. What renders this more extraordinary, is the fact of the coach having passed three waggons in the four miles of ground. At one period of my life I used to work a good deal on those paved roads, and have been much struck with the sagacity of the wheel horses that have been some time at work on them ; for the moment they perceived the wheels on their side the coach were off the pavement, they would, of their own accord, get them on again, being aware of the increased draught.

Although I have said I never witnessed a bad accident by a coach, I have been within an ace of it two or three times. I was once driving a very quick opposition for a coachman who wanted a few days' rest, when the man who was at work on the coach that was running against me was killed. These coaches were in the habit of galloping by each other, and we had had a taste of it on this day. At last my opponent ran by me at a tremendous pace, his coach swinging in a frightful manner. We pulled up shortly after at a watering house, when I told him I thought his coach did not carry her load steadily. He smiled, and said 'all was right.' He proceeded, and, turning round a corner at a rapid rate, she swung over, and he was killed. His name was Jem Robins, a very pretty coachman, and he drove the oppo-

sition to the old-established Shrewsbury and Chester 'Highflyer'—forty miles of as good ground for a coach as can be found in England.

A most awful accident befel the fellow-servant to Jem Robins, equally the effect of carelessness. In descending Overton Hill, between Wrexham and Ellesmere, he suffered the coach to get the better of his horses; and in passing the bridge at the bottom, in a turn, the coach made such a heel that he was thrown from his box into the River Dee, with a fall of about forty feet. He had his box coat on at the time, and the river was swollen by rain, so that his life must have been lost, had not a fisherman been passing accidentally in his coracle, and picked him up.

I have to record a singular escape that once happened to myself, in a coach of my own. I took a party, consisting of four inside and four out, a journey of two hundred and twenty miles. After I had set down my load, with the exception of one on the box, and was walking the horses to the stables, the hinder axletree broke short in two.¹ I had observed the wheels had not tracked as they ought, for the last stage or two, and I intended having her in dock when I got to my journey's end. Whenever it is perceived that the wheels of a coach make four tracks, instead of two, on a straight road, there is always something wrong.

As nothing can be depended upon in the way of art,

¹ An accident similar to this once happened to the Worcester 'Old Fly,' a long-established coach. In the act of changing horses in a town, one of her axletrees gave way, and down she went.

axletrees will occasionally give way, under great pressure, and serious accidents must arise from the consequence, which, nine times in ten, is the upsetting of the coach. Sometimes it happens that the fore-wheel, when it loses its support, inclines inwards towards the carriage, and catching hold either of the bottom of the body of the coach, the springs, or beds—prevents her going over. As when a coach is going fast, there is more weight on the fore-wheels than on the hinder ones, it is the fore axletree that generally breaks. The axletrees of mail coaches very seldom give way, because they are not so heavily laden as the stages. I never heard of but one, and that was on the Holyhead mail, when a very good coachman, by the name of Small, was killed.

Axletrees, however, are now made upon very improved principles, and upon those which almost insure safety. They are manufactured from scrap iron (the best K. Q., or King and Queen, as it is called), and composed of three bars, fagoted *edge-ways*. We all are aware, that if we take a common lath, and bend it flat-ways it breaks with little force; but it takes a good deal to break it edge-ways. There is also another security. Formerly, there were five bolt-holes through the fore axletrees, and three through the hinder ones. Now there are only, with improved makers at least, three in the fore, and one in the hinder—namely, one for the perchbolt, and two through the lower transom plate in the former; and one through the perch, but none through the wings (as formerly), in the latter. These axletrees are now in great part made fast to their beds with clips, which necessarily strengthen

instead of weakening them, as before. Boxes being upon springs also are greatly in favour of axletrees, as the weight is so much more alive upon them than it was upon the old principle.

I was once in a singular, and at the same time most dangerous situation on a coach box, the effect of larking, or, at all events, it might have been avoided. I was driving a very fast coach, and saw a large broad-wheel cart before me, in the middle of the road, with the carter asleep in the bed of it. By way of awakening him, I double-thonged him, as I would a wheel horse, as I passed him, and the whistle of my whip set his horses off. There was one in the shafts, with two abreast as leaders ; and as ill luck would have it, the chain trace of the off-leader in the cart caught upon my near-side roller-bolt. The consequence was, both carriages were locked together, and it was impossible to disengage them. The cart-horses went as fast as they could gallop ; and the rattling of their empty cart so alarmed my horses that I had the greatest difficulty in regulating my pace by theirs, and if I had not they must have pulled me over. The cart horses got blown at last, when we all pulled up together ; and fortunately they went nearly straight, or a dreadful accident must have happened. I had a friend on the box with me who had just recovered from a nervous fever, and it was almost the death of him.

I have to record another very singular accident to a coach which also might have been prevented. It was upset into an immense heap of straw, with the lamps lit ; but fortunately the glass of the lamp next the straw, did

not break, or coach and horses (and perhaps a passenger or two) would have all been consumed together. I must not name coach, or coachman, but a Reverend whip had hold of them at the time. Fifteen years back, the Newmarket and Ipswich mail ran foul of a waggon loaded with hay, and the glass of one of the lamps—which were lit—breaking, hay and waggon were consumed.

Presence of mind is much required when an accident happens to a coach, and outside passengers should never think of quitting a coach by jumping *from the fore part of her, at least*, until she falls to the ground. A friend of mine was put to the test some years since on the Leeds mail, and although he did not exercise his presence of mind to the full extent, he fared better than his companions in danger. The reins broke; the coachman fell from his box, and broke his leg; and the horses ran away at full speed. My friend was on the box; but on the roof was a very corpulent man who made two attempts to quit the coach, which my friend prevented. No longer to be restrained, he leaped, and was killed on the spot. My friend kept his seat for more than a mile, but seeing a waggon and a turnpike gate before him, he watched the opportunity of the coach running near to a high foot-path, to jump upon it, and was not at all hurt. The coach was stopped by the turnpike gate with very little the matter. Now had I been in my friend's situation, I should have got over the roof into the guard's seat, and descended thence to the ground.¹

I was never run away with by coach horses but once,

¹ Note the true way out of a difficulty.—EDITOR.

and then it might have been avoided. I was told it had happened the last journey but one with the regular coachman, and therefore I ought to have been more on my guard. The leaders in that instance twisted the pole-hook from the end of the pole, and went across two fields with the bars rattling at their heels, but the coach was kept on the road and did not go over. In my own case things were not quite so bad; but it being lamp-light I imprudently got on the pitch of the hill before I was aware of it, and then the merry rogues would not be stopped to have the chain on. The road was very hard, approaching to rock, so we went a rattling pace; but as the tackle was good, I continued to keep them straight, and the coach being low, she kept her legs. Having a blind wheeler, I was most afraid of an ugly grip at the bottom of the hill, but all was right at last. Poor Davey Jones—since killed on that ground, and then just recovered from a broken leg—sate behind me on the roof, and I had an Irish gentleman on the box. Neither of them spoke, but when we got into a trot, the Irishman exclaimed, ‘By the powers, but we had a fine escape for it!’ There were but eight horses to work the fourteen miles, so that one would have thought they would have been cured of running away.

By the Roman law, and a very salutary one, all offences committed in drunkenness were visited with twofold penalties. I am happy to have it in my power to say, that, much as I have been amongst them, by day and by night, it is upwards of fifteen years since I have found a coachman drunk at his duty. The last I met with was upon a night coach, and he was in a dreadful

state of intoxication. I was obliged to get a passenger to hold him on his box whilst I drove his horses to Oxford. Being by lamp-light I could not exactly time the coach, and we were a quarter of an hour too soon; so, putting down the slides of the lamps, I pulled up under a wall, and seeing he was getting sober, I addressed my brother whip thus: 'Now B——, you are a pretty coachman, but this will not do. You have a large family, and I fear but ill provided for; let me advise you to keep that right-hand down,¹ or you'll kill somebody one of these nights. Go in and kick your passengers, but say nothing to them, and never let anyone see or hear of you in this state again.' B—— thanked me for my advice, though he did not take it, and in six weeks he was killed from his box.

To return to accidents on the road. Several very bad ones have happened (although perhaps not stated in the papers, as, for obvious reasons, they are suppressed) within my own knowledge in the last twelve months to coaches descending hills—either by some part of the harness giving way, or by the horses being overpowered by their load. Although it is my intention to enter more fully into this part of my subject before I conclude, yet I think it right here to observe, that accidents of this nature would be much less frequent than they are, if coachmen would take the precaution of pulling up their horses short when on the point of descending a hill. This precaution is doubly useful in night work, because

¹ Technical for keeping sober.

it may happen (as it often does¹) that a pole-chain may be unhooked, or a hame strap get loose, and not be discernible by lamp or moon light. But this is not all. Coachmen are not philosophers, but their daily occupation tells them that *force is proportional to velocity*; and, therefore, when that velocity is weakened, the propelling impulse is weakened also; or, in plainer English, the pressure of the coach on the wheel horses is thereby diminished. With wheel horses that will hold back at all, I will be bound to take a loaded coach down most of the hills we now meet with on our great roads, without a drag-chain, provided I am allowed to pull up my horses at the top, and let them take it quietly the first hundred yards. This, it may be said, would be losing time, but I deny the assertion. On the contrary, time would be gained by it; for as soon as I perceived I was master of my coach, I should let her go, and by letting my horses loose at the bottom, I could spring them into a gallop and cheat them out of half the hill (if there were one) on the opposite bank. This advantage, it must be recollected, cannot be taken, if the chain is to be put on; and I have all the time in my favour which is required to put that chain on, and to take it off.

I have before stated several objections to a locked wheel, with a top-heavy load; but I am indebted to that experienced coachman, Mr. Charles Buxton, for the following remark, communicated personally to me the other day. 'If,' said he, 'you must lock a wheel with a

¹ I could name two most alarming accidents of this nature within the last two months.

heavy load, and upon a smooth hard road, let it be the wheel next the ditch, or any other dangerous part. A coach, in going down hill, always strikes on the side that the wheel is *not locked*. I therefore think the coachman should keep as much as he can on that side of the road on which the wheel is locked ; as, by crossing the road, if he meets, or has to pass, anything, his coach will not strike ; and by holding that way, at any time, it will prevent her overturning.' This is quite correct, as the coach naturally strikes in a direct line from the perch-bolt.

An accident that happened this spring to Mr. Henry Wormwald corroborates what I have said of the necessity of collecting horses, and checking the *vis vivida* of a coach at the top of a sharp pitch or hill. He was taking eleven of his friends to dine at Richmond, and in descending the bridge at Kew, his coach got the better of his horses, and away they went. Most of his passengers being awake to their danger, quitted their places ; but Sir Vincent Cotton, who was on the box with his friend, was very roughly handled. The coach was pulled up by some strong iron railings, on the spikes of which the worthy Baronet was landed, and one of them ran some way into his thigh. A little more and the main artery would have been divided, when nothing could have saved his life. A wheel horse and a leader were killed—the pole having actually run through the body of the latter. It was but a few days before this sad accident happened, that I was of the same party with Mr. Wormwald, and considered him a very pretty coachman.

He had a young team—not put together more than three or four journeys—and I thought he handled them well. They were very fine horses and cost large prices.

However necessary it may be to catch up wheel horses, and to make them hold back their coach down a hill, there is no part of the system in which a light finger is more essential to safety. To see the manner in which some persons calling themselves coachmen, pull and haul at horses' mouths when descending a hill with a load, is not only most annoying, but it considerably adds to the danger by trying the strength of the tackle. This, however, is not all. They are, perhaps, not aware that all this force which they employ on their horses' mouths, is so much force added to the pressure of the coach, and in proportion to it is that pressure increased. *The horses at this time are drawing by their heads!* It is wonderful to see with what little trouble to themselves and their horses, some coachmen will take a loaded coach down a hill. Taylor, on the Southampton 'Telegraph' shines here. My friend Mr. Ackers, and myself, were once looking his coach over at Southampton, when the former observed how small his pole chains were. 'Oh, sir,' said Taylor, 'there is never any stress on our pole-chains.' Taylor has some awkward hills to go down on his ground, and those who wish to see execution must travel with him.

There are, however, some horses which no man, however clever, can make to hold a loaded coach down a hill. Of this description is, first, the stiff-necked one (as he is called, and which I have before described),

which turns his head away from his partner, and shoulders the pole; and secondly one which, when he feels the weight pressing upon him, begins to canter or *jump*—as coachmen term it; when holding back, to any effect, is out of the question. With such cattle as these, the drag-chain must be had recourse to; or when there is the least reason to suspect the soundness of the harness. Some coaches that load heavily in hilly countries take the following precaution, and I saw it adopted last year with the North Devon coach, which was changing at Taunton, as I passed through the town—and famously horsed it was:—A small round strap, sufficiently strong for the purpose, passes under the throat of the wheelers' collars, and the pole-chain is run through it. Thus in case of the ring of the hames giving way—which too often happens—the horse is not only prevented from getting back on the splinter bar, which is almost certain to make him kick, but he is enabled by this strap, to keep his side of the coach in its place, and thereby prevent an accident. It must be recollected that these rings of the hames resist all the pressure of the load; and when it is considered that they are not half the substance of the pole-chain, and are as *single links, to the pole chain's double one's*, it is almost miraculous that they do not oftener give way. The strap I am speaking of is no annoyance to the horse, as it works in a part of his collar that never touches him, and the trouble of running the pole-chain through it is not worth speaking of with a slow coach; and these are the coaches that most require such precautions, from the weight they

carry. Many broken limbs and fatal accidents would be avoided by their more general adoption.

All general rules are commonly denominated laws : thus the general rules which bodies observe in the communication of motion, are called the laws of motion. Now, without troubling you with the demonstrations of mathematicians, I shall content myself with observing that, by the laws of gravity, falling bodies, *i.e.* bodies falling by their own weight, near the surface of the earth, double the velocity of their fall in a second of time. By this I mean that a stone which falls sixteen feet in one second, may acquire the velocity of thirty-two in another, and so on in arithmetical progression. This is the simple effect of the power of gravity acting on the stone, which shows that, excluding the consideration of the air's resistance, the velocity of falling bodies is proportionate to the time of their fall. Now, as the action of gravity is continual, so by the doctrine of projects a coach descending a hill must acquire fresh impulse every yard she goes, and of course descends with accelerated velocity. When all this is added to the well-known fact, that *as much force is required to put a body which is in motion at rest, as there is to set a body which is at rest into motion*, the numerous accidents which happen to coaches, in descending hills, are easily accounted for. What I have now stated also confirms the necessity I have insisted upon of checking the active force of a coach before she begins to descend a steep hill ; and, indeed, I may say, in some cases—as with bad holders—before she comes upon a descent which can scarcely be

called a hill. There is a term which coachmen have for this species of road. They call it 'pushing ground,' and if the fall be a long one, it is astonishing how the force of a loaded coach, upon the wheel-horses, is increased, before she gets to the bottom of it; and how difficult it would be to pull her up short, if any accident should happen—that is to say with wheelers of not the very best stamp. I never saw but one coachman quite awake to this—so much so, that he said if he once let his horses exceed a very gentle trot, not exceeding five miles an hour, he should never be able to pull them up until some accident had happened. He was on a coach from Manchester to Lancaster. He had a pair of wheelers that had never been at wheel before, with a very heavy load, and a fall of at least a mile before him, on a paved road, which was of course all against him; though the fall was little more than an inclined plane. I was once in a similar situation with this coachman; but I had not his foresight. I had got a pair of leaders at wheel which were never in that place before, and to mend the matter, they were put on their wrong sides. I had a fall of about half a mile before me, with a turnpike gate at the bottom of it; and not having the precaution to check¹ my coach in time, the accelerated force was such that when I attempted to do so, I found the attempt was vain. I had nothing for it but to whip my wheel-horses up to the pole to keep the coach in the middle of the

¹ I do not like to tell tales, but I could mention four bad accidents within the last twelve months only, from the want of this single precaution. The newspapers, indeed, have enumerated a few.

road, and to lay it into the leaders (not the best in the world) right and left, to get them out of the way of the coach. We fortunately cleared the gate, and all was well ; but the risk was very great, and all from want of a little precaution, and of weighing consequences beforehand. Doubtless, some of my brother whips may say, all this is slow ; *time must be kept*. My answer is : it is all true, and *time* can be kept without sending people headlong into *eternity*, for which they may not be exactly prepared at so short a notice.¹

Before I quit down-hill work, and the chapter of accidents, I wish to recommend one caution to young coachmen in descending a hill ; and this is, to take care that his leaders do not draw on the end of the pole, which many free ones will do when they find the coach coming quickly after them. This not only increases the pressure of the coach on the wheelers, but should either of them stumble, it would necessarily assist in bringing him down.

In one respect, the lives of passengers are made more secure than they used to be, from the frequent breaking of reins. Fast work, and consequently horses in high condition, have obliged proprietors of coaches to look to this most essential part of their duty ; and the giving way of reins is now of rare occurrence. It was, however, only last May twelve months that I was travelling by a certain mail, and met with reins in a most shameful state. It is true the horses were very quiet ;

¹ The patent brake will assist you here in keeping time.—ED.

but, in case of any accident happening to either of them, a fresh one would of course have been put in his place ; so, when I got off the box, I desired the horsekeeper to give my compliments to his master, and tell him, that in the course of a fortnight, I should be up the road again, and if I found those reins were still at work, I should do him the kindness to cut them to pieces before the coach started from the door. If passengers were to act thus a little oftener than they do, it would be advantageous to the public. When reins give way, in certain situations, an accident must be the consequence ; and I have heard various opinions as to which is the most dangerous, the breaking of those of leaders or wheelers. If in descending a hill, more danger would attend the want of command over wheel horses ; as they would, in all probability, either run the leaders down, or drive them out of the road ; but in any other situation I should prefer having hold of my leaders' heads, as by putting them straight, I might keep the coach in the middle of the road, and so prevent her upsetting. I know a guard to a very fast coach which loads very heavily, who says, he does not much mind how fast his coachmen drive him, *provided they will keep their horses in the middle of the road.*

Reins seldom break in any parts but those which run through the territs,¹ the rings of the throat lash, or in the billets ; and a little attention to these points would make all safe, as far as this casualty is concerned. It is, indeed, an imperative duty in proprietors to look to these

¹ Let your reins pass through two rounded bars placed across the centre of the territ, and friction to your reins is reduced, neither can they turn.—ED.

things themselves, and not to trust to their horsekeepers ; and where accidents by their coaches can be traced to the want of such attention, it is but just that their pockets should suffer. Axletrees and springs do not often break now ; and if proprietors choose to go to the expense, their wheels are made secure against coming off. Thus it is pretty clear that accidents to coaches are at this time chiefly to be attributed to these two causes : viz.—either the want of proper skill and care in the servants employed ; or inattention on the part of their masters—the latter the less pardonable of the two.

I believe it is pretty well established in our courts of law, that, for the consequences of any accident to a coach, which, in the common course of things, could be avoided, the proprietors of that coach pay. This is as it should be. Gross negligence¹ the law holds to be nearly equal to malicious design ; and its decision here, *that no man should suffer by the carelessness of another*, is in conformity with the natural sentiments of mankind. Thus it was by the Aquilian Law. The man who was not able to manage his horse, and happened accidentally to ride down his neighbour's slave, was obliged to make good the damage.

Doubtless road coachmen are well aware that the law looks pretty sharp after them, and that they are equally answerable to their employers, as their masters are to the public, for wilful neglect proved against them. I only recollect one instance of an action brought by pro-

¹ *‘Lata culpa prope dolum est,’* says Grotius.

prietors against a coachman, and that was by Messrs. Ibberson, Waddell, & Co. of the Birmingham and Shrewsbury 'Old Prince,' for overturning the said coach, in coming out of the 'Angel' Inn yard at Oxford, on its road to London. The man in question paid one hundred guineas in part of the damages sustained, as it was proved that, though an excellent coachman, he had driven his horses at an unsafe pace round a corner, which produced the accident. Coaches, at that period, used to drive into inn yards, which was a very reprehensible practice.

Numerous accidents have happened to coaches from want of proper attention to the security of the horses' bridles. The throat lash—particularly of the wheelers—should be as tight as can be allowed without injuring the respiration, or there is always danger of the bridle being pulled off. The improvement, however, lately made in harness is some security against this, as far as relates to the middle terrets on the wheelers' pads, and the double, or what is called 'the *guide* terret' to their bridle heads, through which the leaders' reins pass. The former serve to make these reins run from the coachman's hand to the leaders' mouths in very nearly a straight line, whereas with old-fashioned harness there was a considerable bearing *inwards*, which frequently was the means of stripping a horse of his bridle. But this is not all. The guide terret prevents the leaders' rein from cutting a wheel horse's ear, which always makes him fretful, and unpleasant to drive. Some of the old ones—Mr. Fagg for instance—will not accede to the improvement of the

middle territ; but allowances must be made for the prejudices of an old coachmaster. If he were to drive his horses a few stages, he would find the benefit, as they are considerably lighter in hand—much power being lost in the increased angle the rein describes, on the old plan.

I was very near meeting with an accident so lately as last summer by a wheel horse's bridle being pulled off his head, by the operation of the leader's rein passing through a single head-territ, and through the near pad-territ of the wheeler—having no middle territ. I was going to Croydon by a Reigate coach, and, having a seat on the front-roof, had a full command of the horses, which were rum ones, and the coachman, what we call on the road, a 'fresh-catched one.' He had a very raking grey mare before the bar on the off side, who hung off from her partner, and a near wheeler that hung away from the pole. The consequence of this was, that by the strain on the inside coupling-rein—and the near leading rein drawing at a considerable angle through the single head-territ, and no middle-territ—I espied the bridle in the act of slipping over the near wheeler's head as soon as we began to descend Streatham Hill. 'Coachman,' said I, 'your bridle is coming off your near wheeler.' —'By the Lord, and so it is—please to jump down,' said he to a gentleman on the box. The gentleman made the attempt; and instead of putting his foot on the tread of the roller bolt, he put it on the wheel, and got an ugly fall. I was more fortunate in getting down, and reached the mare's head just as the bit was quitting her mouth;

and as the winkers were hanging down, she had begun to mill the coach which she saw behind her. No doubt we should have had a *case*, as we had a considerable fall of road before us, and a regular miller to deal with.

When on the subject of bridles, I will mention one other precaution. When a wheel horse has a trick of throwing up his head, a nose martingal should be used, as he greatly annoys the mouth of the leader that is before him. I should also observe that the present method of throat-lashing coach horses, makes it still more necessary to pay attention to the firm state of the bridles. In coach work no chance should be thrown away. There is quite sufficient danger when every possible precaution is taken.

NIGHT WORK.

Travelling by night, as well as driving at that time for pleasure, appears to be of ancient date. Clodius waylaid Milo in the night on the Appian Way, on his road to Rome; and the brave but unfortunate Lateranus, the Roman Consul, drove his own chariot, for amusement, in the dead of the night. Amongst the fancies of the poets, I imagine I can trace a faint analogy betwixt their description of Night, and our modern night-work on the road. The sun is represented in his chariot and four; but the goddess Night is in her chariot and pair, as if more fitting the hours of darkness; and stars are made to precede her course, having a distant resemblance to our modern lamps.

When all things are considered, our night-work on the road is performed in a manner that is deserving of the highest praise. There are instances of mails—and those from the remotest parts of the kingdom—not losing more than a few hours in the long period of twelve months. Strange also as it may appear, as far as the observation of myself, and many more with whom I have conversed on the subject, has led us, fewer accidents (those in thick fogs excepted) happen to coaches in the night than by day-light. This—if such be the case—is to be attributed to two causes : first, the attention of a night coachman is always on the alert ; and secondly, for the greater part of the night the road is clear of any other carriages but those which travel with lights. Nothing, however, but the width and the excellent state of our present roads could enable the coaches to travel *at the pace they now do* in the night—some of the mails going ten and eleven miles in the hour, which can scarcely be considered safe, taking the vicissitudes of the weather into account. I have driven a good deal by lamp-light, and I have seen the time when, from driven rain or snow, it has been as much as I could do to open my eyes so as to see the road to the extent of the light given by the lamps ; in which case a tight hand on the horses is especially necessary. Although, by looking perpendicularly from his box, or at the hedges, if there are any, a coachman can always see if he is in the road, yet if he cannot throw his eye some way before his leader's heads, he is going, as it were, by guess or at random. He will often get close to things he may meet on the

road before he is aware of them; and therefore, as I have said, it is essential that he should be wide-awake, and have his horses well in hand.

When I first knew the road, more danger was to be encountered by night coachmen than at the present time. Awkward bridges¹ were to be passed; quarters (*i.e.* ruts) were to be changed; and at the bottom of almost every hill was a grip, or something of that sort, which was well calculated to throw down a blind or clumsy horse. To guard against these, night coachmen had their marks—such as a tree, a gate, a haystack, a cottage, or any other object by the roadside, which gave them notice of the danger. All, however, is now plain sailing; and as I before mentioned, we hear of fewer accidents by night than by day.

Unless when the moon is very bright, a dark night and a narrow road are in favour of the safe travelling of a coach by night. When it is what the coachmen term 'a clear dark'—that is, quite dark and black—the lamps give much better light than when the darkness approaches to grey. In very wide roads—particularly where there are no hedges to confine it—lamp-light is both weak and deceiving. A narrow road, sufficiently wide of course for carriages to pass with convenience—with no ditch on

¹ The old way of doing business was certainly slow when compared with the present; but, from the bad state of cattle, and other appendages to coaching, more danger attended it. The following anecdote is told of a night coachman of the old school. He had just got his coach over a very awkward bridge in a foggy night, when he thus addressed a passenger who was on the box with him: 'Well over that, sir; only one eye among us!' That, of course, was his own.

either side—is much the best for night-work. Moon-light is often glimmering and doubtful, particularly when clouds are passing rapidly over her broad face.

There is but one thing which baffles the skill and intrepidity of our night coachmen, and that is—a heavy fog. Lamps here are of no avail, as far as throwing light forward ; and in the worst of cases, the only use that can be made of them is, for a guard to hold one in his hand *behind* the coach, by which he will be able to see whether the horses are in the road or not. Lamps, however, are always useful, in case of any accident happening ; and, except in very clear moonlight, a night coach should never travel without them.

LAMPS, ROADS, COACHES, AND THE USE OF THE WHIP.

I have always been of opinion that still greater improvement than has hitherto been effected might be made in our coach lamps. They are certainly better than when I first knew the road ; for then the glasses used to get black with smoke, and after a certain time they were of little service. If what we read in history be true, we have never possessed the art of making lamps equal to those of former times ; neither, indeed, have we possessed the materials. Perhaps my readers may not object to going back a little into former ages, and hear what they have to say on this *enlightening* subject.

Pausanias, in his history of Greece, informs us that

before that people collected themselves into one city, the statue of Minerva—supposed to have fallen from Heaven—was deposited in a tower, and that an artist named Callimachus made a lamp of gold for the goddess, which, when filled with oil, burned day and night for the space of one year. This, it appears, was owing to the wick being made of Carpasian flax, which was unconsumable by fire. Above the lamp was a brazen palm-tree, which, rising to the roof of the building, dissipated the smoke.

Now, perhaps, there is nothing so very wonderful in all this ; but that the ancients possessed the art of constructing lamps, which would for many ages produce a splendid light, without a fresh supply, I think, from the numerous testimonies, we, cannot hesitate to believe. The most celebrated of all is the one found in the tomb of Pallas (son of Evander, who was killed by Turnus, as Virgil relates in his tenth *Æneid*), which was discovered near the city of Rome in the year 1401. Above the head of the deceased warrior was this lamp found, which neither wind nor water could extinguish ; and that it was the real body of Pallas, the inscription on the tomb showed. Had it not been broken by the over-curious, it would doubtless have been burning now.

In the Appian Way also, at Rome, a lamp was discovered in the sepulchre of Tullia, Cicero's daughter, which had been burning fifteen hundred years ; but this became extinct on the admission of external air. Other lamps are mentioned by credible authors, apparently made of the same lasting materials. One was found in a town belonging to Padua, in Italy, in the year 1500,

which had continued to shine upwards of fifteen hundred years. This lamp was the workmanship of one Maximus Olybius, who it appears, produced this wonderful light by his profound skill in the chemical art. On the urn which contained the lamp, as also the liquor by whose virtue the brilliant light was produced, some Latin verses were inscribed, which have been thus elegantly translated :—

Plunderers, forbear this gift to touch,
'Tis awful Pluto's own !
A secret rare the world conceals,
To such as you unknown.

Olybius, in this slender vase,
The element has chain'd ;
Digested with laborious art,
From secret science gain'd.

With guardian care two copious urns
The costly juice confine,
Lest, through the ruins of decay,
The lamp should cease to shine.

It has been remarked, that the perpetuity of these lamps was owing to the tenacity of the unctuous matter with which the flame was united ; and being so proportioned to the strength of the fire, that, like the moisture and heat in animals, neither of them could conquer or destroy the other. This art, however, is lost.

Curious as the history of this lamp appears, it is but a gnat to swallow when compared with the account given of another by Apollonius in his treatise called

Ἱστορίαι θαυμασiai, or 'Wonderful Histories.' The wicks which were used in these lamps, he gives us to understand upon the authority of another, were made of threads drawn from a *soft stone*,¹ and that there was no end to their burning. This stone was found in quarries in Cyprus and other places; and why these quarries ceased to yield it, we learn from Plutarch almost puzzled the Oracles to say. Garments, it seems, made from threads spun from this stone, instead of being washed, were purified by fire.

The wicks of our lamps are now made with cotton, but flax was the article first used, and we find it spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah. When predicting the tenderness of our Saviour's administration, he beautifully illustrates it by the well-known proverb:—'The bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench: '—alluding, no doubt, to the light of a lamp which, when first kindled, is soon put out. What was done in those times, however, is of little practical use to us in these matters; but I hope to see some improvement made in our road-lamps, as there has been in those used in streets and rooms. Portable gas, it is said, is about to be tried for the purpose.

ROADS.—Although it appears to have been a capital object of Roman policy to open a communication with all the provinces of their extensive empire, by means of those roads which are justly considered among the noblest monuments of their wisdom and their power,

¹ Asbestos, no doubt.—ED.

yet, to the savage tribes of America, the idea of facilitating communication with distant places does not seem to have occurred. Even in civilised countries in Europe, men appear to have advanced pretty far in refinement before it became a regular object of their political economy to form such roads as rendered mutual intercourse convenient. The account of these roads by that eloquent historian, Gibbon, is given in such easy and pleasing language, that I am certain it will not be disagreeable to my readers :—

‘All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which issuing from the Forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the distance from the Wall of Antoninus to Rome, and thence to Jerusalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication, from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire was drawn out to the length of four thousand and eighty Roman miles. The public roads were accurately divided by mile-stones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches were thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams. The middle part of the road, which was raised into a terrace commanding the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in some places near the capital, with granite. Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not yielded to the effect of fifteen centuries !

They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse ; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions ; nor was any country considered as completely subdued till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the Emperors to establish, throughout their extensive dominions, the regular institution of posts. Houses were everywhere erected at the distance of five or six miles ; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses ; and, by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel a hundred miles a-day along the Roman roads.'

Now, as it is my present object to form somewhat of a comparison between ancient and modern travelling, it is but right to observe, that the use of these post-horses, as they may be called, was for the public service, and could only be called upon by an Imperial order. Even Pliny, who was a minister, and a favourite one too, offers an apology, in one of his Epistles, for letting his wife make use of post-horses on a very urgent occasion. There is, however, in this historian's letters, more than one mention of his travelling post. In that to Trajan, when on his road to Bithynia, he informs his royal master that he intends pursuing his journey, partly in light vessels, and partly in post chaises ; but here he was travelling on official business. In his letter to Gallus, descriptive of his villa, he says—' This is but seventeen miles from Rome ; so that, having finished my

affairs in town, I can pass my evenings here, without breaking in upon the business of the day. There are two different ways to it ; if you go by that of Laurentum, you must turn off at the fourteenth mile-stone ; if by Ostia, at the eleventh. Both of them, are, in some parts, sandy (no M'Adam in those days !), which makes it somewhat heavy and tedious *if you travel in a carriage*, but easy and pleasant to those who ride on horseback.'

Roads may be called the veins and arteries of a country, through which channels every improvement circulates. All the aid of science has lately been applied to the making of them ; and by the geological maps published, those countries are pointed out from which the best materials are to be derived. Nothing however, beats the Bristol limestone, broken small, as by the direction of Mr. M'Adam. I really consider this gentleman as being, next to the late Doctor Jenner, the greatest contributor to the welfare of mankind that this country ever produced—that is to say in the civil departments of life. The opposition his system of breaking the stones small met with in rural districts afforded a striking instance of the tyranny of custom, and showed what a task it is to combat with prejudice and error. The labouring men persisted in saying that stones broken so small would wear out immediately ; whereas they were at length convinced that the smaller the materials the more durable they were ; and that a large stone in a road was certain to destroy it in two separate ways :—first, it acts as a lever to the road, by one end raising up the face of it when a wheel passes

over the other end of it ; and secondly, by presenting an obstacle, which is to be surmounted, the wheel falls with increased force from the top of that obstacle. and consequently makes a hole in the road. If an iron hammer were constantly to glide over an iron surface, neither of them would feel the effect for a very long series of years ; but only let there be an obstacle for the hammer to surmount, and drop thence on the iron, the consequence would very soon be destructive to both.

Although philosophers have been long since aware that ice is formed by the *spiculæ* uniting by their own angles, yet it remained for Mr. M'Adam to put to the proof the fact of stones forming an equally firm surface by the uniting of their angles. Such, however, is the case : and where the material is of good quality, many barn floors, on which corn is thrashed, are not so even and so hard as some of our turnpike roads. One other great advantage attends them. When once they bind, there is no obstacle work for the wheels on level ground ; neither is it necessary to round the roads in the middle, from which form several accidents to coaches have arisen ; and I do not think our night coaches could go the pace they now do, with roads rounded in the centre.

The worst material we have for roads is gravel. Upon gravel roads, to use the language of a coachman, there is no life in the coach, but the wheels are always crying out, and on level ground the horses never have a slack trace. Stone is now brought from a great distance, where water carriage is to be had, to many roads in the neighbourhood of which gravel abounds.

After all, pavement is the best surface for a loaded coach to run upon, as far as draught is concerned. Here she is always alive, and the *vis vivida* is a great help to her.¹ Some years since I used to drive the Chester mail a good deal over those paved roads out of Chester, and always considered that the unicorn team was quite equal to the draught. Paved roads, however, are dangerous for fast work :—witness the number of axletrees of coaches that are broken every year in Piccadilly, and that sink-hole of a town, Brentford. It would be a great benefit to the public if all this pavement were broken up, and the M‘Adam system adopted in its place. I could now name a dozen coach axletrees that have been snapped in two in this short distance, within the last eighteen months ; but the most extraordinary case was that of the celebrated Cheltenham ‘Magnet.’ Her axletree gave way in Hammersmith, and the coachman went back to his yard in the City for another coach. The axletree of that coach was broken in the town of Brentford, on the same day, and with the same passengers.

Mr. M‘Adam’s system is about to be put to a proper test in that great thoroughfare. Oxford Street, London. The system, however, is to be improved upon, by having a good coat of broken stone put on the top of new pavement. I have always doubted the abolition of pavement in London streets. In Eastern nations, where neither frost nor snow prevails, almost any materials stand good in their

¹ So long as the pavement is not of asphalte, where horses cannot keep on their legs, and on getting down cannot get up again, Nimrod’s statement still holds good.—ED.

cities; but in a London street, of much thoroughfare, I have no idea of anything but pavement resisting the effects of a six or eight weeks' frost and a heavy fall of snow. If the M'Adam system, however, can be brought to perfection on the improved plan I have just mentioned, the advantage to the town of London will be great.

Looking into history we find that, though several cities had paved streets previous to the Christian era, those which are the ornament of Europe (Rome and one or two others excepted), had not this advantage till about the twelfth or thirteenth century. The Greek and Roman authors speak more of paved highways than of paved streets, though, no doubt, great expense was incurred in paving the streets before the doors of rich inhabitants of the countries about which they write.

That Thebes was paved, even in the time of Epaminondas, we collect from the circumstance of that great general being condemned to the care of the streets, and, by his good conduct, rendering that abject office an honourable one, and afterwards sought for as such. Whether Jerusalem was paved I am at a loss to say, as mention is only made in the Bible of the fore-court of the Temple; although in the Talmud it is stated that the streets were swept every day, which implies some hard surface. When Rome was paved does not, I believe, clearly appear, though certainly not in the time of its kings. Livy mentions that in the year of the city 584,¹ the streets were paved from the Oxen-market to the Temple of Venus, and around the seats of the magistrates in the great Circus; and, in the course of time, officers were

¹ B.C. 170.

appointed for this express purpose. Streets paved with lava, having deep ruts made by the wheels of carriages, were found both at Herculaneum and Pompeii.

Of modern cities, I believe, the oldest pavement is ascribed to Paris; but that city was not paved till the twelfth century, when this great improvement was made by Philip II. Previous to this the filth of Paris was proverbial. I know of no account that informs us when the streets of London were first paved, but certainly not till the twelfth century. In the year 1090, the church of St. Mary-le-bow, in Cheapside, was unroofed by the wind, and four beams, twenty-six feet in length, sank so deep in the soft earth, that not more than four feet of them were visible. As trade and wealth increased, pavement gradually became extended. Holborn, according to Anderson's '*History of Commerce*,' was paved for the first time by royal command, in 1417. Other streets were subsequently paved under Henry VIII.,¹ and Smithfield in 1614. All historians agree that after the use of pavement in cities, diseases became less frequent.

I must now return to the practical part of my subject.

COACHES.—I know not whether such may be the taste of my readers, but, for my own part, I like now and then to look back into former ages, and see how they

¹ In the King's Order it was said: 'the highway named Holborn, in London, was so deep and miry, that many perils and hazards were thereby occasioned, as well to the King's carriages passing that way as to those of his subjects. He therefore ordained two vessels, each of twenty tons burthen, to be employed at his expense, for bringing stones for paving and mending the same.'—Anderson's *History of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 244.

managed matters in those days. The three last centuries have been, I believe, justly called the wonder-working centuries; and doubtless, within this period, not only have many of those arts been restored which were lost in the wreck of time, but many of the old ones improved upon; and others, of which the ancients had not the most distant notion, have been invented and perfected for the use and convenience of man. To carriages, however, it was left to the present century to put the finishing hand, and I really believe they have arrived almost at perfection. Let us then look back a little towards their origin, and trace them to the present day.

I am not going to the Chariot of the Sun, nor to Moses's Principia, nor to Solomon's chariots, in which he dealt so largely; but I think I have read that in the time of the 'Judges,' horses and war-chariots were made use of among the Canaanites, though the Israelites had none. Homer's heroes fight in them; and this will do for my purpose, which is to show that their use is of very early date. What their form was it requires better information than I am master of to determine; but doubtless it was various.

If by the word *coach* we are to understand every kind of *covered* carriage in which one can conveniently travel, there is no doubt that some of them were known to the ancients, and several of them admit of a construction that places them in our list of carriages. The *arcera*, of which mention is made in the Twelve Tables, was a covered carriage, used by sick and infirm persons, and answers to our covered waggon or *wain*. This was

superseded by a still more easy one, called the *lectica*, from its similarity to bed, or couch. Then comes the *carpentum*, or horse-litter, the form of which may be seen on antique coins, where it is represented as a two-wheeled car with an arched covering, and which was sometimes hung with costly cloth. Still later, we find the *carruca*, first mentioned by Pliny, and coming nearer in their appellation to our name for such vehicles; but so little is known of them, that it is, I believe, a matter of conjecture as to the number of their wheels. They were, however, carriages of state, ornamented with gold and precious stones, and the Romans considered it an honour to be carried in those which were very lofty. It is worthy of observation, that in the Theodosian Code, the use of them by civil and military officers of high rank, was *commanded* as a mark of their exalted situation in life. After this period covered carriages became the common appendages of Roman magnificence, until the sentiments which prevailed under the feudal system again banished them. It being then considered essential to the feudal lords, that their vassals should be always ready to serve them on horseback, they discouraged the use of carriages, as tending to make them indolent and unfit for military service.

In more modern times, Hanover surpassed all other cities in the number and splendour of its carriages. In 1681, there were fifty gilded coaches, with six horses in each, at the magnificent court of Duke Ernest Augustus. In the history of France are many proofs that at Paris, in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and great part

of the sixteenth centuries, the French monarchs rode most commonly on horseback—the servants of the court, and the princesses, with the principal ladies, being chiefly mounted on asses. Persons of the first rank often sat on a horse behind their *équerry*, when the horse was led by servants. When Louis, Duke of Orleans, brother to Charles the Sixth, was assassinated, his two attendants (*écuyers*) were mounted on the same horse. In the year 1534, Queen Eleanora and the princesses rode on white horses at a sacred festival; and the historian Sauval informs us, that, in his time, there remained several horse-blocks in Paris, which had been ordered by the Parliament in 1599. Although about this time there were only three coaches in Paris, yet it appears that carriages were used in France as early as 1294, when Philip (the Fair) issued an ordinance suppressing the use of them by the citizens' wives. Henry the Fourth was assassinated in his coach; but that he had but one, appears by a letter which he wrote to a friend, and which is preserved. 'I cannot wait upon you to-day,' said his Majesty, 'because my wife is using my coach.' From drawings preserved, however, which give the figures of these carriages, it does not appear that they were suspended on springs, or even by leather straps, which we call braces. The coach in which Louis the Fourteenth made his public entrance, was supposed to be the first that was constructed on that principle.

Travelling in a carriage, however, became unfashionable when Richard the Second's Queen, the daughter of the Emperor Charles the Fourth, showed the English

ladies how gracefully and conveniently she could ride on a side-saddle. Coaches were, I believe, very little known in England till about the year 1580, when, according to Stow, they were introduced from Germany, by Fitz-Allen, Earl of Arundel. According to Anderson, when the English Ambassador came to Scotland in 1598, he had a coach with him : and Anderson places the period when coaches began to get into common use about 1605 ; yet, at the Restoration, Charles the Second rode on horseback between his two brothers.

Coaches were seen, for the first time, in Spain in the year 1546 ; and towards the end of the sixteenth century, John of Finland, on his return from England, brought with him to Sweden the first coach. Before that period, the Swedish nobility carried their wives with them on horseback. In Russia, it appears there were elegant coaches in the seventeenth century ; but to what nation we are to ascribe the invention of close carriages or coaches, I am not able to determine. Dr. Johnson informs us it is Hungary. To the man who first placed them upon springs, is the next greatest credit due.

I have no means of ascertaining when stage-coaches first began running in England, but I have read that, in 1662, there were but six ; and a pamphlet was written by one John Crossel, of the Charter-house, to suppress them, giving, as a reason, that they brought people to London on trifling occasions, and their wives with them. Hackney coaches were first established in London in 1625, when there were only twenty, and in Paris, where they were better known by the name of *fiacres*, about twenty-five

years afterwards. In ancient Rome carriages were let out for hire, as mentioned by Suetonius, who calls them *rheda meritoria* and *meritoria vehicula*.

The use of coaches has given rise to a profession, or trade, which in all large cities affords employment and maintenance to an immense number of people.

USE OF THE WHIP.—As far as my observation has directed me, I am enabled to state that, generally speaking, or, indeed, with few exceptions amongst men of character, coachmen are attached to, and kind towards their horses. It is, however, their interest to pursue such conduct if they wish to stand well in the opinion of their employer; for as a carpenter, says the old proverb, is known by his chips, so is a coachman by his horses. A horse does not cry out when he is hurt; if he did, who could punish him?

There is not a tenth part of the punishment by the whip administered to horses in coaches that was to be seen when I first began to travel with them. At that time, indeed, it was customary to see half-a-dozen ‘points,’ as they are termed, or pieces of whipcord ready knotted, hanging to a coachman’s button-hole, most of which, if not all, would be used before he had finished his day’s work. The causes of all this are obvious. The roads were bad, which destroyed the vigour and courage of the horses, and they were not of so good and well-bred a sort as we now make use of in coaches. To these is to be added, that in very many cases horses were absolutely whipped into the necessity of being whipped; or, in

plainer English, they were so accustomed to be urged on by the driver that, after having been a year or two at work, they would not exert their powers until called upon to do so. At the time I am alluding to, no sooner was a coachman on his box and had started his coach, than he began to show off to his passengers, by a display of neat strokes with his whip, whether his horses required punishing or not. I am ready to admit that some of these old hands exhibited great execution in this part of their profession, and that, from the comparatively little use that has been lately made of it, the expert management of the whip is now rarely to be met with. Amongst London coachmen I have most particularly noticed a deficiency here. I could name a score who are excellent performers as far as the finger goes, but when they come to hit a near-side leader, the blow falls powerless, and brings to one's mind the old joke of the flea biting the lobster.

There are as many ways of whipping coach horses as there are horses in the coach; and, as there is a right and a wrong way of doing most things, a young beginner may observe the following directions: we will begin with the wheel-horses. Before a coachman hits a wheel-horse, he should twist his thong three times around the crop of his whip, holding the crop at that moment somewhat horizontally, by which means the thong will twist towards the thin end of the crop, when the thong, being doubled, will not exceed the length of a pair-horse thong, and in some measure resembles it. Its being double renders it of course more severe, by falling more heavily on the horse,

and by the two ends of the thong not being spread, but close together at the time of the blow, it falls with increased force. When the off-side wheeler is struck, the coachman's right arm should be put out from his body, in the same position in which he presents it to his tailor to measure him for a coat, but the blow should proceed entirely from the wrist. The part on which the horse should be struck is about four inches behind his false belly-band, or somewhere near the short rib on his right side. The stinging part of the blow is then felt under the belly, and, unless a horse is quite beaten, or of a sulky and bad disposition, he seldom fails to answer it. If he do not answer it here, he must be struck before the belly-band, when the blow falls just behind the fore-arm, on a part on which the skin is very thin. If a wheel-horse shows symptoms of vice, such as a disposition to kick, etc., or, in short, if he refuses to answer either of the other calls upon his exertions, a blow with the double thong on his ears generally brings him to his senses. I very much dislike seeing a coach horse struck over the ears—the parts being so very sensitive—and nothing short of absolute necessity justifies it. I have, however, seen the time, and often too, under the old system, when nothing short of this severe punishment would have got a coach home.

In hitting a near wheeler, the coachman brings his right hand exactly opposite to his face, and, turning the crop three turns around as before directed, he lets the thong fall sharply across the horse's loins for three times in succession, if he do not answer sooner, observing that,

after the third blow, he draws the thong obliquely across the horse's back, by which means his arm returns to a state of rest, and the crop falls gently across his reins, just above his left hand—the crop pointing a little upwards, to prevent the thong getting under or touching the near wheel-horse's tail. Should this be the case, if he lowers his crop the thong will almost always get released, but should it not, he must let the thong loose, and draw it out *from the point*. When it comes up from the tail, let the coachman throw back his crop a little to his right hand, and the point of the thong will fall across his fingers, when he catches it, and puts it back into his hand. It must be observed that in striking the near wheel-horse the wrist only, as in the sword exercise, is at work; the body must be quite at rest, and, after the whip is brought to bear, the arm must be quiet also, until the third blow is struck. Nothing is so slow and so bad as to see a man all legs and wings on a coach-box. He cannot sit too quiet and at his ease, and his right arm should be as still as circumstances will admit.

There is only one other method of hitting a wheel-horse, and that is called *pointing him*. This is done by hitting him with the point of the thong, when loose, just behind his shoulder, but it is not considered neat execution. If there should be a free leader before the bars, it causes him to fret, and is, in my opinion, only to be had recourse to in emergencies—as, for instance, in turning round a corner or into a gateway, when a leader is to be hit, and before the coachman can recover his thong, a wheel-horse should require whipping also.

It is generally supposed that in whipping a leader neatness of execution is more especially displayed, and such I take to be the case. It is, however, quite a mistaken notion to suppose that it is in the power of a coachman to punish a leader with the single, as he can a wheel-horse with the double thong. I have heard of *this* man who could cut a horse's leg off, and of *that* who could lift him from the ground when before the bar, but I have never seen the coachman who could mark a horse with the point of his thong. No doubt, however, the blow from the loose thong falls very sharp, as it falls on a tender part—the inside of the thigh.

As the off-leader presents himself more fully to the right hand of the coachman than his partner does, the horse that is the less free of the two is generally put on that side. There are but two ways of hitting an off-leader: one, by letting the thong fall gently over his neck or just behind his pad, when his driver only just wishes to refresh his memory, and let him know that he has a whip in his hand, and the other, when he wants to hit him sharply, by striking him with the point of the thong just under his bar. The hard hitters of the Old School never conceived they had done the latter effectually unless they struck their horse twice at least, if not three times, the last stroke always ending in a draw. As this word *draw* is peculiar to the lingo of the road, I must explain to such as may not exactly comprehend it. We will suppose a coachman to hit his off leader three times. The two first blows are given, as it were, underhanded; that is to say, the hand is lowered, so as to

admit of the thong going *under the bar* the first two strokes. When the third or last is given, the point of the elbow is thrown outwards, so as to incline the thong inwards, which brings it up to the coachman's hand after the stroke, it generally falling across his breast, but which would not be the case were it not for the draw. Another advantage also attends the draw. A thong so thrown very seldom hangs in the bars, and nothing is more un-coachmanlike than to hit a leader above his bar. A horse's mouth should also always be felt before his coachman hits him.

Hitting a near-leader with neatness and effect is considered—as it certainly is—the most difficult part of the use of the whip. There are two ways of doing it: one, by two common strokes and the draw, and the other, by a sort of back-handed stroke, which is a very neat one, and sufficiently severe; but it does not bring the thong so immediately up to the coachman's hand as the draw stroke does. In the back-handed stroke, the wrist describes an exact figure of eight, and the arm cannot be kept, as before, quite still. In the other method of hitting him, the coachman's arm is brought about opposite his chin, the two first blows proceeding from the wrist alone; but in the third, or *the draw*, the hand descends, the elbow is thrown outwards, and, by two jerks of the arm, which it is impossible to describe on paper, the draw is effected, and the thong comes, as before stated, across the coachman's breast, so as to enable him to catch it instantly.

There is one other way of hitting a leader, and

that is by what is called *the chop*. This is done by throwing out the right arm rather forward, and with it, of course, the thong, and then bringing it back sharply, with the wrist inclined downwards. The thong falls severely on the horse's thigh, and comes up to the hand again the same as in the draw. This is a very useful blow in a narrow, confined place, or when it is necessary to lose no time before a leader is hit, and, when neatly done, has a very workmanlike appearance. I should here observe that this blow generally falls above the bar, particularly if a horse is not at work at the time.

I have said that leaders should always be hit under their bar. This cannot always be done; for if a horse hangs back from his collar, his bar is so low that it may be difficult to get under it. In this case, however, the blow is made to tell smartly, as it is in the coachman's power to throw his whip into the flank, which no doubt is a very sensitive part. When a leader is well up to his collar, he always ~~can~~, and always should, be hit under his bar. Should the point of the thong catch, or, as we say on the road, 'get hanged,' in the bars or the pole-pieces—neither of which will it do when properly drawn after the last stroke, as the inclination of the hand in the act of drawing it enables it to clear them—no violence should be used to loose it, or a broken crop will be the consequence. On the contrary, the arm should be thrown forward, and the thong lightly moved, when in a minute or two it will shake out. Should it be fast between the eye of the main bar and the pole-hook, the leaders should be eased a little, and it will get released. Some-

times, however, on a wet day, a thong will lap around some of these things so fast as to make it necessary for the guard, or some person, to get down to untie it. This is technically called *having a bite*. The double thong will also sometimes hitch in the ends of the wheelers' traces, as also in the point of the false belly-band. To obviate this, in gentlemen's harness, these parts are always covered, or piped as we call it.

I shall dismiss the subject of whipping coach horses with these few hints :—One of the best proofs of a good coachman is to see his right arm still ; and although for the safety of his coach, he ought to be able to punish a horse when he requires punishment, yet he should, on all accounts, be as sparing of it as he can. Horses may be whipped till they become callous to whipping, and therefore slow ; and, in the condition in which coach-horses are now kept, a pound of Nottingham whipcord will last a good coachman his life-time. The very act of throwing the point of the thong over the leaders' head or letting it fall on their backs, as a fisherman throws his fly upon the stream, will set half the coach horses in England, in these days, into a gallop.

One more caution, I find, I have overlooked :—A free leader should not be hit in a short turn, or he may break his bar. I hit one once, and he broke, not only his bar but the pole-hook ; and I have seen the main bar broken in this way. Neither should leaders be hit in going over a small bridge which is much raised, or when the pole points upwards ; their draught on the end of it may snap it in the futchels.

The manufacture of four-horse whips is now arrived at great perfection, and affords employment to many hundred hands.

DIRECTIONS FOR DRIVING.

All practical arts are facilitated by rules ; and, after all, what are rules for the acquirement of any art, but the observations of others collected into a small compass ? As far as my knowledge and experience have led me, the following remarks may be found worthy of notice, and I offer them for the benefit of the inexperienced.

He who has made a good beginning has half finished his work,¹ and this applies to driving coach horses. Harness them well and they are much easier driven. It is also with coach horses as it is with mankind—the physical strength is in the governed, therefore we must humour them a little. When starting a coach, don't pull at their heads, but feel their mouths lightly, or they may bolt, throw themselves down, or break through their harness. If old horses, and the stage commences with a hill to go down, let them feel their legs for two hundred yards before they are put to their usual pace. When in a turn, point your leaders well—that is, take proper ground for them to make the turn, and let your wheelers follow them. As wheel-horses are always *in a hurry* to make the turn, shoot them out to the contrary side, just

¹ 'Dimidium, qui bene cœpit, habet.'—*Ovid*.

as you have pointed your leaders; for example, if your turn is to the right, catch up your near wheel rein, and hit your off wheel-horse, 'and *vice versâ*.' This will keep the head of your pole (which you should have your eye upon) just between your leaders, and your wheelers will follow as if they were running on a straight road. This also secures you against danger, by clearing your coach of posts, gutters, etc. No man can make a neat turn with four horses, unless he shoots his wheelers at the same time that he points his leaders. Never turn a loaded coach short, even at a slow pace, for she is never safe when there is not an even bearing on her transom beds. If turned short, at a quick pace, she must go over, and for this reason: by the laws of nature, all bodies put in motion by one power will proceed in a straight line, unless compelled to change their course by some force impressed. Thus, a horse at full speed is with difficulty turned to right or left; if he turns suddenly, and of his own accord, he puts his rider's horsemanship to the test. So it is with a coach. A sudden turn to one side the road makes her sway towards the other, and her centre of gravity is lost. The middle of the road is the safest place for a loaded coach—except under peculiar circumstances.

The powers of a horse in a fast coach can be measured to a mile. He may be very good for eight or ten, but very bad for twelve miles of ground; with heavy loads, the *priming* is soon taken out of most of them, and therefore they must be looked to. Wheel-horses have the hardest place, as they are at work up hill and down; nevertheless, if

favour be shown, it must be to the leaders. You may drag a tired wheeler home ; but if a leader cuts it, you are planted. Always put your free'st leader near side, as you will have him better in hand than if he were on the other. If a leader is weak, and cannot take his bar, tie up the wheeler that follows him, and he will place him by the side of his partner. Leaders should be fast trotters for fast coaches. When they are galloping the bars are never at rest, consequently much of the draught is lost in the angles they describe.

Wind is almost as essential to a coach horse in fast work as to a hunter. Many high blowers, however, keep their time very well, with a little watching and nursing. If you see them distressed, keep them off their collar, and let them only carry their harness for a hundred yards or so, and they will recover if their condition is good. They work best as night horses ; but if driven in the heat of the sun, they ought to work *out* of the throat lash. Indeed, I would never throat lash a leader in very hot weather if I could drive him without doing so. Many horses will pull and be unpleasant in the throat lash, but go temperately out of it. Some persons will tell you that a coach horse cannot carry his head too high, *provided he is obedient* to the hand, and I am of this opinion. At all events a horse that goes with his head *down* has a mean appearance in harness. The horse that carries his head higher than his partner should have his coupling rein uppermost of the two.

Temper in harness horses is much to be regarded. Some coachmen will argue that a horse should never

know his place—that is to say, he should go wheeler or leader, and on both sides. I am of opinion, that if a horse, working constant in a coach, *fancies* his place, he should have it, and in nine cases in ten he will pay for the indulgence. On the other hand, some horses care not where they are put—working equally well, or ill, in all places. Temper in a coachman is also to be regarded. Indeed it is one of the essentials to a real good workman. This was the only drawback from the celebrated Jack Hale ; and it is told of a great artist, not now at work, that, having four rum ones to deal with, and unable to make them work to please him, he threw his reins on the footboard, and exclaimed—‘ Now, d—n your eyes, *divide it among you*, for I will be troubled with you no longer.’

There are several ways of dealing with horses’ mouths in harness ; a good deal of trouble is often requisite to bring them to work pleasantly, and many are incurable. Some horses will not face a curb chain at all, and the bars of other horses’ mouths, as also their chins, are so hard, that it is difficult to make an impression upon them ; the latter case is more prevalent of the two. It is also difficult to handle a horse in coach harness, particularly a leader, whose mouth is very tender. A snaffle is not safe, as in case of a drop, or a bolt, it has not sufficient power to catch him up quickly, at that distance from the driver’s hand. For a gig horse it may occasionally answer well. The usual plan then resorted to is, to ‘cheek him,’ as we call it ; that is, to put his coupling rein to the cheek, instead of the bottom of the bit. Should even this be severe for him, and he brings his

head too much towards his partner, his draught rein must be put down to the bit, and that will bring him straight. He should have liberty in his bearing rein, and his curb chain should not be tight. A check rein, to a nose martingal, is often of service here, as it keeps his head steady, and makes him face his work. Generally speaking, such horses work pleasanter out of the throat lash.

For horses with very hard mouths there are many expedients : there is the bit with the double port, and I have seen the Chiffney bit used with very good effect. Putting the curb chain in the mouth—over the tongue, instead of under the chin—tells well with some horses, as it prevents what is termed a dead mouth. Letting out the head of the bridle in the middle of a stage has also a good effect, as the bit and curb chain then take hold of a fresh place. A check rein is sometimes put to the middle link of a horse's curb chain, as it keeps the bit in the middle of the mouth, and also keeps the mouth alive.

There is one other move for a hard puller, and that is all I am acquainted with. Put the bearing rein *to the top of the bit* (not the cheek), and the coupling rein to the lowest loop in the bit ; this creates a counter-action, and not only makes the bit more severe, but keeps the mouth in play. A hard puller is generally safest,¹ and more in place, before the bars than at wheel, and he will pull less with a free partner than a slack one.

If it can be avoided, a coach horse should not be

¹ With a good pair of wheel-horses, leaders are soon checked.

broken in a fast coach, as there is no time in fast work to try his temper and humour him. Many horses, by being put at first into quick work, get a habit of cantering, and never settle to trot well afterward.

If a coachman has got a kicking wheel-horse, he should put him on the near side, as being less liable to be touched by anything that may annoy him. If on the off-side, throwing the reins on his back, or touching his tail when getting anything out of the boot, may set him on, and mischief may ensue. A kicking leader is safer with a ring on the reins. Many bad accidents have arisen from the want of this precaution, by a leader's getting a rein under his tail. With first-rate hands, however, this is not so essential, as they generally have their horses better in hand. In the Old School, it was most useful.

With gentlemen's horses very fresh in condition, it often happens that a wheeler kicks over his trace, especially in a turn, and *a case* is sometimes the consequence. A light hip-strap prevents this, as, when the horse rises, it takes the trace up with him. In London streets this is particularly useful, for when horses are turning short, or in a crowd, they are so constantly having their traces slack, and therefore more easily kicked over. A friend of mine—a capital coachman too—had them all four down at once in London, last year, owing to this manœuvre. The hip-strap looks slow, but it is safe with a rum one.

The following directions were given me by a very experienced coachman, and I thought them worth book-

ing. I undertook to take his coach a journey for him ; but, although I knew it well, I had never driven the road. 'That middle twelve miles of ground,' said he, 'is a punisher, and you must mind what you are at with this load. You have two hills to go down and three to go up in the first seven miles. Don't stop to put the chain on, as they'll hold well, and the tackle is good ; and don't let them walk up the hills, for they are bad hands at that : you will lose a horse's draught by it, and perhaps get hung up on one of them. You must take fifty minutes to do the first seven miles, and good work too. When you get to the top of the last hill, get down and put your near leader to the cheek, and they'll toddle you over the last five miles in half an hour with all the pleasure alive.'

Speaking to coach horses from the box is now considered slow, but it is not without its effect. I can produce rather a curious instance. A certain coach proprietor who horsed one of our mails had his horses reported to the Post Office as being unable to keep time. He was determined not to take them off the ground, so sent for a coachman for the purpose of driving them. Having been told that they had had their share of whipcord, the artist (and such he surely was) tried the following expedient. About an hour before his time to go out with his coach, he went into the stable where his horses stood, and seizing a besom, he disengaged the handle of it. With this he belaboured each horse for at least five minutes—speaking to him in a certain rough language at the same time. Suffice it to say, these horses never lost

time afterwards ; and in the course of the week I was eyewitness to their performing their twelve miles stage—and a very severe one—quite within their time. The moment they heard the voice that had made such an impression on them in the stable, they mended their pace almost to the top of it, and no doubt they had been whipped to a stand-still by their former driver. In the Old School the voice was much resorted to, and often with good effect ; and I have been much amused with hearing Dan Herbert (of whom I have before spoken) speaking to his horses in a peculiar tone and language, as much as to tell them what he should do to them if they did not mend their pace.¹

It is not every man who knows when a coach horse is at work. He may keep a tight trace, and yet be doing little. There is a certain increased tension of the frame when a horse is taking weight with him, which is the surest criterion to judge by, and which never escapes a quick and experienced eye. What are called lobbing goers take a greater weight with them than horses of finer action—that is, provided they are equally close workers. Heavy draught shortens the stride of horses, after having been a few years at work.

A most material point in driving four horses is to keep them well in hand—not merely as regards their work, but also for the safety of the coach. The track which a

¹ The classical reader will recollect the speeches of Antilochus and Menelaus to their horses, in the 23rd book of Homer's 'Iliad,' and the good effect they had upon them in the race. Even a whistle is thought slow at the present day by our first-raters.

coach makes in descending a hill will show whether horses are properly held together or not. We are perpetually hearing of accidents from horses taking fright and bolting across the road; but these only happen to clumsy fellows, of which the list is considerable. Many coachmen in fast work like to have their horses pull at them—considering it safer—and therefore cheek their horses to enable them to do so. I have seen Peer with all his horses to the cheek, over what is considered his fastest stage—from Hounslow to Egham—but it is a rare occurrence.

Although there are rules for passing and meeting other carriages on the road, yet there are times when they need not be strictly adhered to, and a little mutual civility and accommodation between coachmen is pleasing. Thus, if I have the hill in my favour—that is to say, if I am going down, and a loaded coach is coming up it at the same time—I ought, if I can do it with safety, to give the hardest side of the road to the other coach. Nothing can be lost by a little civility when it costs nothing.

Before a coachman gets upon the box, he should walk round his horses' heads and see that his curb chains and coupling reins are right, and, above all things, that the tongues of his billet buckles are secure in their holes. Many bad accidents have arisen from the want of this precaution; and I set down no man as a scientific or even a safe coachman who does not see to these things.

A graceful and at the same time a firm seat on his box is a great set-off to a coachman. He should sit quite straight towards his horses, with his legs well before him

and his knees nearly straight : with the exception of a pliant motion of his loins, on any jolting of his coach, his body should be quite at rest, and particularly so when he hits a horse. In handling the ribbons also, as little motion of the arm should be observed as the nature of the act will admit ; the reins should be shifted, when necessary, with almost as gentle a motion as if he were sorting a hand of cards at whist, and apparently with as little difficulty. To see a Johnny Raw (and I could name a few—particularly two or three of these nondescripts, *half waggoners*, *half coachmen*—who are to be seen coming into Piccadilly with their coaches, one or two of them in smockfrocks) clawing at his reins, and reaching down to his knees for them, is not only most annoying to the eye, but it is dangerous to go within some yards of him—for, command over his horses he cannot have.

There is an excellent way of handling reins, not generally adopted. This is, when you want to take a pull at your horses, to open the fingers of the right hand, and put the reins into them. Then pass the left hand, with the fingers open in front of the right hand, and receive the reins into it again. Thus you get extra power over your team without disturbing their mouths.

I have often amused myself, in the progress of these letters, with looking back into those times which every man of taste delights to think of, and comparing the pursuits of gentlemen sportsmen of ancient days with those of the present period. Virgil's account, in his third Georgic, of a race with chariots, is said to excel all other descriptions ; but we must not look to this enchanting

poet for practical instructions in the art of driving. His seat on the coach-box is all wrong. The

—illi instant verbere torto,
Et *proni dant lora*,

may be translated 'stooping to the reins when they whipped their horses ;' which is quite at variance with our practice. For the benefit of some of my brother whips, I will give them Mr. Pitt's English of this fine passage :—

Dost thou not see the car's contending train
Shoot from the goal, and pour along the plain ?
By varying fits each trembling charioteer,
Now flushed with hope, now pale with panting fear,
Plies the loud lash, hangs headlong o'er the reins,
Swift bounds the fervid axle o'er the plains :
Now deep in dust obscur'd the chariot flies,
Now mounts in air, and gains upon the skies.
The strife runs high, too fierce for dull delay,
The dusty volumes darken all the way.

Independently of appearances, a firm seat on a box is very necessary for safety to a coachman and his passengers, or a little thing will displace him. I once was by the side of a coachman on the box of a mail, when he was chucked off merely by one of his hind wheels striking lightly against the post of a gateway, and a bad accident was like to have been the consequence.

NIGHT WORK.

For an amateur, I have had my share of this part of the profession. Many's the time and oft that I have

left a good bottle of wine and a blazing fire to get on a coach-box in wet cold nights ; and used to say that, If I were to go upon the road, I would be a night coachman through a well inhabited country. For six months of the year it is undoubtedly the pleasanter service, and I never found any difference between taking my rest by day or by night. It is, however, only calculated for a man quite in the prime of his days, as all his energies are wanted. He ought also to know his line of road well ; for lamp-light, as I have before observed, is rather treacherous—not only in fogs, but when horses are going at a moderate pace (as up hill), with the wind just behind them, when the steam arising from their bodies follows them, and necessarily obstructs the light. I was once lost owing to this circumstance, and obliged to pull up my coach, but no accident arose. Accidents often occur from coachmen neglecting to light their lamps in going into a town. It is constantly happening that, when a coach comes up the road in the morning, there may be no obstruction in the streets ; but rubbish from buildings, stones, or many other things, may be thrown out by the time she comes down again at night. It was from this cause that Mr. Dennis had his thigh broken the winter before last in the town of Brentford on his Bath coach.

The following rules are worth observing by night coachmen :—Take your rest regularly, or you will be sure to become drowsy, if you do not go to sleep ; keep yourself sober ; keep a tight hand on your horses, your eye well forward, and get out of the way of carts and

waggon in time ; keep the middle of the road, and be sure to keep time. Chains and springs on the bars are good things for night work, as they prevent the leaders' traces coming off.

COACH HORSES.

The style of coach horse, both for gentleman's work and on the road, is strangely altered since I first knew what a coach horse was, and it is altered much for the better. One part of the system, however, remains as it was ; and that is, although little horses, well bred, are now the fashion, yet large horses still continue in heavy work, and it must be so. Horses draw by their weight, and not by the force of their muscles ; although doubtless well-furnished muscles assist the application of that weight. The hinder feet form the fulcrum of the lever by which this weight acts against a load, and the power exerted is always proportioned to the length of the lever—the weight remaining the same. Large animals, therefore, draw more than small ones, though they may have less muscular power, and are unable to carry weight so well. The force of muscles only tends to make a horse carry forward his centre of gravity ; or, in plainer English, it is the weight of the animal which produces the draught, and the play and force of its muscles serve to continue it. What chance would four little horses have before the 'Old Salisbury' coach with four ton of luggage about her ? Muscular force would not be able to oppose such a weight for a continuance.

To show the effect of pace, it may not be amiss to mention, that by calculations made as to the mean strength of animals, a horse drawing horizontally and at the rate of two miles and a half in an hour, can work for eight hours in succession against the resistance of 200 lbs.¹ Quadruplicate that pace, and he would find an eighth part of the time a very sufficient dose. Thus I contend that we can pretty nearly measure a horse's power in harness.

Good hind legs and well-spread gaskins are very essential points in a coach horse—the weight or force applied proceeding from the fulcrum formed by the hinder feet. Thus we see a waggon horse, when brought to a dead pull, will sometimes not touch the ground at all with his fore feet. I have a cart mare that will prove this assertion any day in the year; and to show that horses draw by their weight, it frequently has happened that a horse has been unable to draw a cart out of a slough, until a sack of corn thrown on his back, when he has had little difficulty in doing it. Exclusive of the weight, this has in some degree the effect of increasing the tension of the system, and tension is necessary to motion. Thus it is, as I have before stated, that what we call lobbing goers take more weight with them than horses of better action.

There is another reason why little horses are unfit for heavy work. They will seldom walk and draw at the same time; for if they walk, they are catching at their

¹ One hundred and sixty pounds is the assumed power of a horse at plough.

collars, and doing but little. I think I never saw four little horses walk in a coach and take anything like an even share of draught ; and I have served an apprenticeship in hilly countries.

There is no labour that I know of so hard as that of coach horses in fast work ; for which reason it is bad policy to purchase infirm horses, though many proprietors persevere in doing so. Generally speaking, they are out of their work half their time, and are certain to die in their owner's debt. Blind horses are less objectionable as the roads now are. A blind horse that will go up to his bit is much pleasanter and safer to drive than one that can see, but who hangs away from his work. Blind horses, however, work better in the night, hot weather not agreeing with them. To enjoy one's health 'like a blind horse in winter,' is a proverb.

I do not call a horse a coach horse unless he has good legs and feet. As a wheel horse he is never to be depended upon down hill if he has not sound limbs under him. However good in his nature, he cannot resist it without something to resist it with, and if he is weak in his joints he must be powerless. To this is to be attributed numerous accidents to coaches—many of which the public know nothing about. If horses are purchased with good legs and feet, there is no reason why, in the fastest work, they should not last many years, if shod with care and well looked after. There are two horses in the Southampton 'Telegraph' that have been more than ten years in that coach ; and a grey

gelding, the property of Mr. Lawrence, of Shrewsbury, earned 1,440*l.* in the Holyhead mail.

Coach horses live very high—in short, as the term is, their belly is the measure; but I do not find that (barring contagious diseases), where their owners are good judges of condition, they are much subject to disease. Were hunters to eat the quantity of corn coach horses do, their constitutions would not stand it, because their work is not regular. A coach horse is certain to sweat four days out of five, which keeps his blood pure, and almost does away with the necessity for physic, of which, in general, they have but a small portion—perhaps not so much as they should have. I like to see flesh on a coach horse, if it be good flesh. It is quite a mistaken notion that fat horses cannot go fast in harness; they are more powerful in draught than thin horses; and having nothing but themselves to carry, the flesh does not injure their legs, as in riding.

A horse in a fast coach ought not to work more than four days without rest, as he becomes leg weary, and wears out the sooner. His system also becomes too highly excited. A horse a mile, reckoning only one side of the ground, is about the mark. Thus we will say that ten horses shall work the coach *up and down* a ten-mile stage, which gives eight at work and two lying at rest. Every horse then rests the fifth day. In slow, heavy work, coach horses will do their ground every day in the year, barring accidents or illness, but 'it is the pace that kills.'

The average of coaching stock in slow work may be

from six to seven years, provided they are fresh and firm on their legs when brought in. In fast coaches from three to four, or scarcely, I fear, so much. After a hot summer, coach horses are subject to disease, and the month of October is the worst in the year, in consequence of its being their moulting season, when all others are supposed to be affected.

Hunters in the hunting season would not eat the quantity of corn that coach horses do; for they are feverish after their work, which is not the case with the latter, because they become accustomed to this almost daily excitement. In this respect they resemble ourselves. If a man drinks nothing for a week, and then takes a bottle of port wine, he is feverish, but if he drinks the bottle of wine for six days in succession, he feels no such symptoms on the seventh. Some coachmasters are fond of giving their horses all manger meat, but this will not do, as it often produces indigestion and disease. A certain portion of long hay is necessary for a horse's health.

It is a most fortunate circumstance for breeders of horses that it does ~~not~~ require a perfectly formed horse to make a good coach horse. Indeed, some of those which the London dealers and job masters sell for such high prices for gentleman's work, are perfect brutes when taken out of harness, and such as no man would ride for the worth of them. The *sine quâ non*, the strong and lengthy shoulder, with well-bent hind legs, are not essentials here, and a good head and tail, with a little high action, are all that they stand in need of. A very stiff-

shouldered horse, however, seldom makes even a good coach horse, and I think that is rather a prominent feature in English horseflesh.

Coach horses are subject to many accidents, and to one of a peculiar nature—namely, to broken legs, and broken in the act of trotting on fair ground. Fractures in the foot in draught horses and others are common, and La Fosse mentions several of them; but fractures of the leg in trotting over level ground are, as I have before said, peculiar to coach horses, and doubtless caused by over-tension of the limb in the act of drawing. I have heard of scores, but never witnessed more than one of these distressing accidents, and this was about two years ago, in the Southampton ‘Telegraph’—a rather singular coincidence attending it. I was sitting by the side of Peer, who was driving, and we were arrived within half a mile of Bagshot. ‘The old mare (near leader) goes lame this morning,’ said I.—‘Why, yes,’ replied Peer, ‘her corns want dressing.’—‘Did you ever break a horse’s leg?’ resumed I.—‘Twice,’ answered Peer. These words were scarcely out of our mouths, when I exclaimed—‘Pull up! the job is done—the old mare has broken her leg.’ Peer doubted it, but on getting down to her, found it was broken just above the fetlock joint. We took her out of the coach, left her on the road, and in half an hour she was put out of her pain. At the time the accident happened we were not going more than nine miles an hour, on a road as smooth as a barn floor. A coach horse’s leg is in most danger of being broken,

if, with a heavy load behind him, he snatches at his collar *in a turn of the road*.

Coach horses are also subject to a kind of vertigo, or what we call on the road the megrims. Doubtless this is caused by a temporary pressure on the brain, and may therefore be termed one degree of apoplexy. This is often brought on by running in the face of a hot sun, and for this reason horses subject to the megrims ought to work at night. The attack comes on very suddenly, though a snatching motion of the head sometimes precedes it. If not immediately pulled up, the horse drops. Coach horses thus afflicted should have attention paid to the state of their bowels, and partake often of antimonial alteratives. Worms are said to produce the megrims. What we call on the road 'a megrim horse,' is always dangerous, as, when seized with the complaint, he rolls away from his partner, and of course takes him with him. It is dangerous, therefore, to drive such a horse near to a precipice or ditch.

Hot weather has a singular effect on many horses, and it often happens that what we call a good winter horse is frequently a very indifferent one in the summer. Mr. Richard Lawrence's reasons why coach horses, in the hot months, should be wetted all over with cold water before they commence their stage, are founded I dare say on what he terms 'pure philosophical principles,' but I fear he will never establish his doctrine. Indeed, he does not appear to entertain such a notion; though I see no good reason why. Appearances are trifles when put

in the scale against animal suffering, and particularly when we consider what this suffering animal is.

Coach horses are subject to symptoms known by the appellation of '*the lick*,' which greatly injures their condition. They lick each others' skins, and gnaw their halters into pieces. This proceeds from a heated state of the stomach, produced by the excitement of high feed and work, and is removed by alterative medicines or physic.

YOUNG HORSES.

My experience on the coach-box having been chiefly confined to the public road work, I have not had sufficient practice in the difficult art of breaking in young horses, to enable me to dictate to anyone on that subject ; and having been, in the course of these letters, particularly cautious in offering any opinions not sanctioned by practical observation and knowledge of the matter in question, I determined to apply for information on this part of my subject to a quarter whence I was certain to receive that which could be depended upon. I wrote to that well-known and experienced coachman, Mr. Charles Buxton, who has been so long famed for excelling in this branch of coachmanship, and who was kind enough to write me the following excellent letter, which, I am certain, in his zeal for the profession, he will excuse my giving to the public :

' I have sent you the mode that I have adopted in

putting young horses in harness. I think it best to put a young one in, *the first time*, with only one other, which should be steady, good-collared, and quick. A great deal of room should be given him in his head, and he should be driven at the cheek of an easy bit, with his pole-piece rather slack. He should be started very quietly, making the old horse take collar first, and the first time should be in a wide space of ground, so that he may be allowed to start any way he pleases without being checked. If he is alarmed and inclined to *bounce*, he should not be held hard, and on no account stopped, for, if he is, he may not like to start again, particularly if high-mettled. The old horse will hold him, so as to prevent his running far.

‘If a young horse is shy of his collar, he should not be pressed to it at first, as he may take a dislike to it, and become a jibber by so doing. I have driven horses many times before they have touched collar, and, by not forcing them, they have taken to it of their own accord, and turned out very good horses. When a young coach horse is stopped, it should be done very gradually, allowing at least ten yards to do it in; for, if it is attempted to stop him short, he will resist, and then *he is drawing by his head*. For the same reason horses should not be held hard in going down hill, which is a fault most coachmen have. They forget the great weight they are throwing upon them, as they are then drawing by their heads.

‘When a young horse is first put to a coach, he should be very carefully turned to the pole, so as to prevent its touching his hind quarter, which might make him

kick. When he has been driven long enough to make him steady, he should be taken up in his bearing rein, and put down lower on his bit, and driven in a wide circle, or figure of eight, keeping the inner horse well up to his collar and bit. In his breaking he should be frequently stopped, but not held after he is pulled up, as, if he is high mettled, it will make him restless, and, if dull, he will not require it. Great care should be taken at starting to make the old horse begin first if the young one is inclined to be hot, as it will prevent him plunging. If he is heavy, and not ready to start when the command is given, he should be whipped till he answers it.

‘Horses should have some notice given them to move, as well as soldiers—a click, or a whistle, or anything the driver pleases ; and I think it is a good plan to use horses to stop by notice, as it may prevent accident ; and I have found hallooing to a horse when he kicks have great effect. When you have such a one to deal with, he ought to be taken very short in his pole-piece, and gagged ; and when he begins to kick he should be whipped on the ears, which punishment, in my opinion, should never be inflicted *but for vice*. It is a brutal practice, which I wish all would deprecate.

‘When horses are put for the first time into coaches, the same mode of giving them their heads ought to be adopted. Throat lashing a young horse, either wheeler or leader, shows great folly and want of judgment ; but I shall not say anything to you on *coaching*, as you know more of it than I do, but I will add this remark, which is, that I have driven many horses that would go perfectly

quiet as leaders, that would never go at the wheel ; the reason is, they will not bear being confined by the pole-piece. I forgot to mention that all horses ought to have their sides frequently changed, particularly young ones.'

To the excellent advice contained in this letter I have only one remark to add, and that applies to the road, and not to gentlemen's work. Coach proprietors—at least all those who do business on a large scale—should be in possession of a break, into which they should put their young horses previous to their going into regular work. The practice of putting a young horse never accustomed to harness into a coach laden with passengers—the lives of whom, putting their individual selves out of the question, may be most valuable to their families and their country—is most reprehensible, and one that, when injury is sustained by it, should be visited by the severest penalties the law can inflict. Were any further proof wanting to show the high estimation in which the lives and limbs of His Majesty's subjects are held by the law of the land, it would be found in that statute which pardons homicide if committed ('se defendendo') in order to preserve them.

WAGES AND COACHMEN.

Wages of coachmen are very trifling, certainly not sufficient to find the superior order of them in clothes. Those of the highest attainments in their art do not get more than eighteen shillings or a pound a week ; but the

regular stipend is twelve or fourteen, and from this, in some yards, eighteen pence a week is deducted for duty. Mail coachmen on the lower ground (that is, not out of London) receive sixteen shillings a week wages. Although the *certain* income of a coachman appears small, yet those on swell coaches that load well, with two a day, and consequently only one home, make a very comfortable livelihood—say from two to four hundred pounds a year. Perhaps I could name a few who top the latter sum, but not many. Those who drive into and out of London are allowed the privilege of not entering on the way-bill the passengers they may take up on the first stage off the stones. These they call their *short shillings*.

When I first knew the road, shouldering was very much the fashion—ten times more than it is now. Perhaps there may be some of my readers who do not know what shouldering is; if so, I am obliged to tell them that it is only a genteel term for robbery: it is putting into our own pockets what ought to go into another person's. A little of it, however, is generally winked at by coachmasters—particularly on the night coaches; for without it, tongue and buckle would not always meet—or, in other words, guard and coachman would sometimes be starved. There are other terms for a shoulder-stick, such as, *a short one*, or *a fish*; and another, which is particularly expressive, and was made use of a short time since to a friend of mine. 'You have no luggage, I believe, Sir,' said coachee to him, after having brought him about fifty miles.—'I have none,' said my friend.—'Then if you please you shall get down at the turnpike,

as *I mean to swallow you.*' This, however, was not altogether without an excuse, as it happened on a Company's coach, where coachmen are not allowed to kick, and there is no way of getting an odd shilling on a cold night. This bubble, however, I believe has burst, and there are not many Company's coaches now to be seen.

To prove how much a thing of course shouldering was fifteen years ago, I have only to relate the following fact. I was on the box of one coach, when we met another. 'That is little Billy Burton,' said I, 'is it not?'—'Yes, d—n him,' said my brother whip; 'I wish he would break his neck, for the little d—d *rascal* will spoil our road.'—'What has he been doing?' I asked.—'What!' replied coachee; 'why, *he books every shilling*; our road will be worth nothing in a short time.'—'A new-fashioned sort of little d—d rascal,' said I.

Some coachmen remain for many years on the same coach: though, generally speaking, I think they are too much given to change. Long service denotes good conduct, good conduct ensures respect, and respect generally carries with it corresponding advantages. For instance—if a man is in the habit of travelling by any particular coach, and finds the same coachman always upon it, he begins to consider him in the light of an old acquaintance, and instead of one shilling naturally gives him two. Not only this; but if he wants a little business done up the road, he can depend on his old acquaintance, and pays him accordingly. Chester Billy has been above thirty years on his coach. Dan Herbert was much

longer on the Chester mail; and Jack Peer's father has just retired from the box of the York 'Express,' *after a service of thirty-seven years on the same coach*, though under different names. She was once called the 'Nelson,' and before that the 'Paul Jones.'

I do not think a coachman ought to drive more than seventy miles a day; and if this is done at two starts, it is in his favour. The attrition, or wearing of the human frame, under daily excitement, must tend to produce premature old age, and consequently shorten life; and this excitement must be considerable when a man drives a fast coach eighty or a hundred miles a day without a stop—particularly if his coach is strongly opposed.

The expenses of coachmen on the road are heavy, and should be taken into consideration by passengers. They have their horse-keepers to tip every week, or they will not do their best for them; and the wear and tear of their clothes is a heavy tax on their pockets. They have, I fear, sometimes to complain of the illiberality of passengers; but, as far as my observation has led me, they are satisfied with one shilling under, and two shillings for anything above thirty miles; and indeed they are well entitled to that sum—more especially when we recollect that they are subject to empty coaches. No great difference is now made in respectable coaches between the fees of in and outside passengers, as it so often happens that the latter are the better able to pay. I could name a man—an old friend of mine—who never gave a coachman or guard less than a pound at a time; but of course he is an enthusiast in our line, and can afford it well.

No man, however, should give him *less than a shilling*, and as much above that sum as he likes. If he often travels the same road, his money is not ill-bestowed.

I have never travelled with what are called Company's coaches, on which neither coachman nor guard is allowed to kick; nor do I suppose I ever shall. An old acquaintance of mine, however, was amusing me the other day by a description of a ride he had upon one of them. When he came to the end of his journey, he told the coachman to fetch him his luggage, and his answer was very much like 'Fetch it yourself, and be d—d.' From what we have lately seen and heard, we may venture to pronounce the word 'Company' but another name for trickery and humbug; and I hope never to see it applied to so respectable a profession as the road.

I confess I do like to see a good coachman at work, but there are not many to be met with, and, strange as it may appear, they are becoming, in proportion to their number, more scarce every year. This, however, is easily accounted for. From the sound and fine state of the roads, the condition of the cattle, and the improved method of performing road work, coach horses are now so above their work that the *assistance* of their driver is seldom called for. In another half-century, I much fear the art will be lost. When I am in town I sometimes take a peep at the mails coming up to the Gloucester Coffeehouse,¹ and such a set of spoons are, I should hope, difficult to find. They are all legs and wings; not one

¹ This stood on the site of the St. James' Hotel, Piccadilly.—ED.

of them has his horses in hand, and they sit on their boxes as if they were sitting on something else.

As Black Will says, I suppose I am 'beginning to see danger;' for I confess I am now not comfortable on a fast coach with an awkward fellow on the box, though I care not what pace I go with a workman. I would almost as soon be with Mr. Mytton¹ in a gig—and that is no joke. I had a turn with him three years ago *for the last time*. We had only four hours to go forty-three miles in, or lose our dinners; and twenty minutes allowed for lunch. We did it; but not without breaking a shaft, knocking down a bullock, having one horse on his head, and jumping, gig and all, over a good fence.

I have already observed that, as a set-off against want of skill, we have now one good security, and that is, we seldom hear of a coachman drunk. This was too much the case in the Old School, and the effect of hard living on the night coachmen operated strongly against them, and produced numerous accidents. Some ten or a dozen years ago, it was common to hear such a dialogue as the following amongst members of this fraternity:—'A bad job that, last night, with the heavy "Gloucester"! how was it?'—'Why, some says Joe was asleep.'—'Was he lushy?'—'No, he warn't drunk, nor he warn't sober; *the liquor was a dying in him like.*'

There is a certain weakness in human nature which is ever desirous of looking into futurity. The coachmen of the Old School were somewhat touched with the same

¹ The eccentric 'Jack' Mytton of Halston, Salop. See his Life by Nimrod.—ED.

credulity that operated so powerfully on the heroes of antiquity ; and, like them, they had their divinations and omens of good and evil. The single magpie foreboded some untoward occurrence, and a hare running across the road before their horses was little less than the flooring of their coach. In my early days also they played a game with their passengers which is now never heard of. It was a game of chance—the various things they met on the road constituting the chances. Thus, a horse was so much, a man so much, an ass so much, and so on through almost all the animal creation ; but an old woman, sacrificing (*sub dio*) to the powers of digestion, won the game at once.

From the speed of coaches, and the improved breed and condition of coach horses, coachmen are now obliged to be careful to whom they trust the reins ; for which reason we do not see so many amateurs at work as we formerly did. It is indeed highly culpable in a coachman to trust the lives of the passengers and his master's property to anyone whom he has not good reason to know is safe. A man, however, may be a very safe and good coachman with horses he knows, and still a very unsafe one on some roads with those to which he is quite a stranger.

The following is not a very bad way of doing business, and was communicated to me by a brother amateur : 'When travelling with a coachman I do not know,' said he, 'I always adopt the following plan—that is, if I wish to work. In the first place I never got upon a coach-box yet with anything like *half-pay* about me ; such as a black handkerchief around my neck, or in blue pantaloons,

neither do I think I ever shall. I always take care to have a good deal of *the drag* about me. A neat pair of boots, and knee-caps, if cold weather; a good drab surtout—if not a poodle; a benjamin or two about the coach, and little of *the spot* about the neck. For the first mile I always observe a strict silence, unless broken by coachee; but at this time he generally runs mute. He is perhaps but just awake, or is considering about his way-bill—reckoning his passengers, thinking what he has to do on the road; and, if a workman, looking over his team to see if all is right. Leave him alone for a short time, and when his mind is at ease he will look you over as you sit beside him. He will begin with your boots, proceeding upwards to the crown of your hat; and if he likes you, and you make a remark or two that pleases him, and shows you to be a judge of the art, the first time he stops, he will say—‘Now, sir, *have you got your driving gloves on?* would you like to take ‘em.’ I am here alluding to country work, and not to the roads near London.

Homer appoints a Providence over brutes, and doubtless they are, on every consideration, well worth our protection; but we have lately been pestered with some lessons on humanity too expansive for general practice, or for the limits of our species. This has been very properly denominated humbug, and is, I think, losing ground. As far, however, as humanity towards horses is connected with my present subject, I recommend the practice of it most strongly to coachmen; and that the recommendation may have the greater weight, I will

give it in language more forcible than my own—in the words of that accomplished orator the late Lord Erskine: ‘We are too apt,’ said his Lordship, ‘to consider animals under the domination of man in no view but that of property; whereas the dominion granted to us over the animal world is not confided to us absolutely. *It is a dominion in trust*; and we should never forget that the animal over which we exercise our power has all the organs which render it susceptible of pleasure and of pain. It sees, it hears, it smells, it tastes, it feels with acuteness. How mercifully then ought we to exercise the dominion entrusted to our care!’ Coachmasters as well as coachmen should bear this in mind; and indeed it concerns us all—for ‘how can we expect mercy, having none?’

The Benevolent Club was established upwards of twenty-five years since, and was presented on its formation with a handsome donation by the B. D. C. Club. It is entirely confined to guards and coachmen, but none are admitted after the age of thirty. Each member contributes one guinea per quarter to the fund, from which, in case of accident or illness preventing his being at work, he receives two guineas per week for any period not exceeding one year, and a guinea a week for life if totally disabled.

GUARDS.

Guards on the *mail* coaches are of course necessary appendages to the establishment; and, that they may be

equal to their duty, only go moderate distances—say from sixty to eighty miles, when they are relieved by others. Those on the long stages are in my opinion imposed upon by their masters, and, by being made to do more than they are equal to, are half their time asleep. Many of them are two nights up for one in bed; therefore this is only the natural consequence. They go from London to Exeter, and Shrewsbury, and other places equally distant, without stopping more than three-quarters of an hour on the road, which in bad weather is a punisher. Indeed I have often felt sorry for guards; and, much as I may be awake to these matters, have been at a loss to know how they always contrive to live. Starting with perhaps an almost empty coach, on a frosty night, to go one hundred and sixty miles, is a hard undertaking of itself; but to drink against four coachmen (and they must take their allowance), on that length of ground, with nothing to pay for it, is one still harder. I have, however, a word to say about these said guards, which may not be ill-timed—I mean those on *stage-coaches*.

Were I travelling by a stage-coach, to which there was one of those appendages called guards, and were I of that description of passenger so well defined by Mr. Liston in the play—who tells him, ‘Remember *it is hoptional*’—I might also say to him when he kicked me for my money, *what have I to remember you for?* However, to render the matter plainer, let us reduce this to a dialogue, and picture to ourselves a passenger at supper

on a pair of hot roasted fowls—being their second appearance in that character—when in walks the guard :—

Guard—‘ Please to remember the guard, sir.’

Passenger—‘ Certainly (Mr. Sheridan would have said), for it is impossible to forget that phiz of yours. But what have I to remember you for ?’

Guard—‘ For taking care of your luggage, sir.’

Passenger—‘ I wanted no one to take care of my luggage; the proprietors, your masters, are answerable for that.’

Guard—‘ I know they are, sir; but I hope you will remember me for taking care of *yourself*.’

Passenger—‘ Oh, that is another part of speech; but pray what had you to protect me with ?’

Guard—‘ My horn, sir.’

Passenger—‘ What ! have you no fire-arms ?’

Guard—‘ No, sir.’

Passenger—‘ Then on what pretensions do you call yourself a guard ? You resemble what we call in Latin *lucus a non lucendo*.’

Here then ends the dialogue; but, joking apart, this matter of the guard without fire-arms is nothing less than a tax on the public, which the public have no right to pay. Let the guard be provided with proper fire-arms, and he might be equally entitled with the coachman to his fee; but without them he is a mere nonentity, and very often deprives the coachman (who does something for his money) of his due; for some passengers do not like being kicked twice in the same place. The attack made on the Hereford ‘Champion’ coach last

winter, near West Wycombe, must have opened people's eyes a little on this subject. Had the guard of the 'Champion' been provided with a blunderbuss, there might have been by this time one villain less on the earth. It is but justice, however, to conclude this part of my subject by observing, that among guards to light coaches, as well as to mails, are to be found many men of great integrity, who are entrusted with bankers' parcels and other valuables to a large amount, and who well understand the duties of their situation; and there are others who scarcely know how to open a coach door. There are scabby sheep, however, in all flocks.

An *active* guard to a coach is certainly a security to passengers, and I will mention an instance or two. I was once driving a mail by lamplight, when I saw a man running just before the leaders' heads. Fearful of running over him, I pulled up and hailed him. It proved to be the guard. He told me that the night before they had like to have had a serious accident (the leaders were knocked down) by two donkeys being in that part of the road with their legs tied, and consequently could not get out of the way of the coach. I was driving another mail in the night for a coachman who was ill. I came upon a waggon in the middle of the road, and no driver to be seen. I pulled up my coach, and called to the guard to blow his horn; but before the words were out of my mouth he was in the waggon, and, taking the whip out of the waggoner's hand, awoke him from his sleep with an unmerciful hiding, and then jumped upon his coach, whip and all. This example was wanting, for the same thing

had been occurring several times on the road, and it was less pardonable because the offenders knew the mails were coming.

During the hard winter of 1814 a guard distinguished himself much on the Holyhead road. There were fourteen mails due in Dublin, and the merchants and others were much distressed about their acceptances. The road was open as far as Corwen in Merionethshire, but the passes through the Carnarvonshire mountains were blocked up. By extraordinary exertions, undertaken chiefly at his own suggestion, this man got the coach, filled with bags, to Holyhead, for which he received the thanks of the Post Office, accompanied by a reward. Several others that I could name have run great risk of their lives in getting through flooded roads, and I know of two instances where their lives were sacrificed to their duty.

Before I quit this subject, I wish to observe that I am far from being of opinion that guards are useless appendages to stage-coaches. On the contrary, I think no coach, running a long distance, and in the night, should be without one, but they should be provided with fire-arms, kept in good repair. Setting aside the idea of highway robbery, it is impossible that coachmen in the night can be answerable for the luggage on their coach; nor, indeed, can the guard, if he is asleep, and asleep he must be a great part of his time, if worked in the way I have stated. He should not go more than one hundred miles, and *he should be paid by the proprietors.*

Fond as I am of the road, I will never miss an op-

portunity of exposing imposition, and of standing up for the rights of the public. I was travelling a short time since by a coach, when, at the second change out of London, a guard presented himself to be paid by the passengers. On another occasion a postilion who drove the leaders attempted to kick. My answer to him was this : ' Tell your master he does not want six horses, but *he wants a coachman who can drive the other four.*' There is another species of imposition, which should be resolutely opposed by the public, and this is, the demand of twopence ~~on~~ a parcel before it is delivered from the office, *after the carriage is paid.* For instance, I book a parcel in London, and pay twopence booking : another twopence is demanded in many offices, besides the amount of the carriage. This is a fraud on the public, for where can the parcel be deposited, but in the office of the town it is directed to be left at ?

I have another word to say respecting *mail* guards. It is nothing less than an imposition on the public that these servants of the Crown should be paid by persons travelling in mail-coaches. Government allows them nothing more than a mere pittance of a few shillings a week, leaving the public to pay them ; whereas the public have nothing to do with them. That they carry fire-arms is true, but it is to protect the letter-bags—*the property which Government is paid to protect*—that they would use these fire-arms, and not on account of the passengers. In short, strictly speaking, they have nothing to do with the passengers nor their luggage, their sole duty being to protect the mail. I therefore contend that, as Govern-

ment is paid for carrying the mails, Government, and not the public, should pay the persons who protect them.

GENTLEMEN COACHMEN.

On looking back into history it is quite evident that the rise and declension of ancient states were strongly characterised by the varying manners of their people, and it can be little doubted that the present commanding attitude which England holds in the scale of empires is to be attributed to her manly diversions. Amongst these the management of horses, *and particularly of horses in harness*, has ever held a conspicuous place in all civilised countries. In my first letter on the subject of the road I touched a little on these matters, and how they were managed in days of yore ; but the interest taken by all descriptions of persons in these enlightened times in the actions and sports of the celebrated characters of antiquity induces me to return to them, particularly as some of them are intimately connected with the present part of my subject. I am further encouraged to do this by a knowledge of the fact that these letters are read by great numbers of road coachmen, many of whom may not have dipped into this part of the history of the ancient world, but which, in some measure, so much resembles the proceedings of the present day.

Strange as it may appear to us at this great distance of time, it is a settled point that the greatest honour that could be bestowed upon a man for a period of more than

one thousand years, was a sprig of the wild olive tree entwined round his brow for having gained a victory at the Olympic games ; or in other words, for having proved himself either the best coachman, or as having produced the best horsed chariot of his day. This sprig of olive, however, was accompanied by other most extravagant marks of distinction ; and the wearer of it was not satisfied with statues, inscriptions, altars, and sacrifices during his life-time, but the immortal Pindar (or some other great poet) was called upon to hand him down to posterity in an ode, for which, no doubt, he was made to ' pay the piper ' well. Every gentleman has cast his eye over those songs of triumph,¹ which are unfortunately the only existing evidence of his sublime muse. One of his commentators gives him no small praise for raising so many beauties from such trivial hints, and for kindling so great a flame with so little fuel ; whilst another says *it is vain to imitate him !* Let us sportsmen, however, remember, that the fire of Pindar's muse, which warmed and dazzled Greece, shone forth in honour of coachmen, jockeys, runners, wrestlers, and prize-fighters.

I am not going to bore my readers with a long dissertation on this subject, but shall merely describe to some of my brother whips, who may not have known them before, the origin and end of these pastimes ; and I will do so in as few words as I can.

The Olympic games were established God knows

¹ It is supposed that in the banqueting room at Olympia, in which the winners were entertained, these complimentary odes were sung in their presence by a chorus, accompanied by instrumental music.

when; but certainly revived as a religious ceremony about nine hundred years before Christ. One Iphitus, an Elean, has generally the credit of their revival; and they were celebrated near to a city called Olympia, in the territory of Elis, in Greece—a country celebrated for good horses. Horse and chariot racing were considered their noblest sports, although many other tastes might be gratified. Olympia was their Newmarket; they had their Jockey Club, their judges, and clerks of the course, as at the present day; and there were chariot races for horses of various ages. The utmost regularity prevailed, and—though Greeks—it is asserted that they were not up to a cross.

My object here may easily be seen, to form some little comparison between past and present days; and at the same time, if it be necessary, to offer an apology—or, rather, a precedent—for the gentlemen dragsmen of our own age. The ancient Greeks were said to hold out the torch of knowledge, and their taste in the arts was a guide to the world. What they did, therefore, could not have been considered bad taste; and when we remember that the celebration of these their favourite pastimes outlived the laws, the customs, the liberty, and, I believe, the religion of their country, we know not how to condemn them. Let us, however, produce a few memorable instances of the veneration (amounting, indeed, almost to insanity) in which the worthies of antiquity held a victory at the Olympic games.

It is related of Philip, King of Macedonia, that in one day he heard of three great events—a signal victory, the

birth of his son Alexander and a winning race at Olympia; but *which of the three gave him most pleasure*, his biographer, Plutarch, does not determine. That great general Alcibiades brought no less than seven chariots at one time to the post, and won the equestrian crown, being the only Grecian who ever won three prizes *at one time* in chariot races, and for which he was immortalised by the poet Euripides. If we are to credit history, he entertained all the spectators at his own expense, which act of profuseness the cautious Nicias—perhaps a little jealous of his growing popularity—strongly urges in his well-known harangue against the Sicilian expedition, of which Alcibiades was to be the leader. Nicias feared the object he had in view was to repair the injury his fortune¹ sustained by these acts of extravagance; but the gallant general presently soothed the fears of his audience by giving them to understand that this imposing display of his magnificence to the people was intended to reflect an honour on their country and on their name. The renowned Darius adorned his chariots with sculptures in gold and silver of the victories he had gained on the Olympic course; and Nero neglected his empire to win the sprig of olive. It would be endless, however, to enumerate similar instances, for history would afford hundreds of them.¹ I shall only proceed to a short description of the scene of action, as

¹ Perhaps the following is amongst the most powerful. In an oration composed by Isocrates, to be spoken in a court of justice, he founded his proof of the nobility of the family of Alcibiades, on the statement that, by his mother's side, he was descended from Alcmaeon, *the first Athenian that had won a prize in the chariot race at the Olympic games!*

handed down to us. Before, however, I conclude this part of my subject, I must observe that the honours of victory were not confined to the owners of the chariots and horses, for the latter (the horses) were crowned amidst the applause of the spectators, and in one instance, where forty chariots were broken in one race, the victorious one was preserved in the Temple of Apollo. Having stated this havoc among the competitors, it is no wonder that Ovid should say that the honour of contending for this prize was almost equal to the winning of it.

There was one Pausanias, a Cappadocian, who wrote a history of Greece about two hundred years after the birth of Christ, who, though he might have been a little more explicit (but perhaps his taste did not lie that way), has given us a pretty just idea of a race with chariots over the Olympic course, and poets of all nations have immortalised the sport. Sophocles modestly sings of half a score starting at the same time, but Pindar avails himself of his licence, and makes the number forty. When we consider that the length¹ of the course they ran upon did not exceed an English mile, and that the charioteers had to make twenty-two turnings round the two pillars—generally, we may conclude, at full speed—it may well be imagined what dreadful accidents must have happened. Nothing, indeed, but the form of the chariot used could have ensured safety to anyone. By the representations we

¹ The Circus Maximus at Rome, in which the Romans exhibited their chariot races, was an oval building of one thousand eight hundred feet in length, and four hundred in breadth.



meet with on ancient coins they appear to have been very low, and only on two wheels, somewhat resembling our curricule. Springs, of course, they had none, and, as there was no seat for the coachman, great part of his skill consisted in being able to preserve his balance and keep his legs. Although Nero once made his appearance at the Olympic games in a chariot drawn by ten horses, which he attempted to drive himself, four horses driven abreast was the usual team, as I stated before.

Those who wish to be better acquainted with the nature and importance of this species of diversion will find it described in the 23rd 'Iliad' of Homer, the 'Thebais' of Statius, Sophocles, and numerous other authors, both in verse and prose. According to Pausanias, however—and here we are more entitled to the truth—the method of starting was as follows. The chariots entered the course according to order previously settled by lot, and then drew up in a line. They started at a signal given, and to him who passed the pillar at the top of the course twelve times, and the one at the bottom ten times, in the neatest manner, without touching it or overturning his chariot, to him was the reward given.¹ As, however, it was the aim of everyone who started to make for this pillar as to a centre, we can easily imagine the confusion there must have been in forty, or even twenty, chariots, all rushing to one given point, amidst the clanging of the trumpets. No one was debarred driving his own chariot, and kings were often seen contending against kings. The following is the translation

¹ This is what we call *feather-edging*.

of a description of a chariot-race from the 'Electra' of Sophocles.

When, on the second day, in order next
Came on the contest of the rapid car.
As o'er the Phocian plain the orient sun
Shot his impurpled beams, the Pythic course
Orestes enter'd, circled with a troop
Of charioteers, his bold antagonists.

One from Achaia came ; from Sparta one ;
Two from the Libyan shores ; well practised each
To rule the whirling car : with these, the fifth,
Orestes, vaunting his Thessalian mares :
Ætolia sent a sixth, with youthful steeds
In native gold arrayed : the next in rank
From fair Magnesia sprang : of Thrace the eighth
His snow-white coursers from Thesprotia drove :
From heaven-built Athens the ninth hero came :
A huge Bœotian the tenth chariot filled.

These, when the judges of the games by lot
Had fixed their order, and arranged their cars,
All, at the trumpet's signal, all at once
Burst from the barrier, all together cheer'd
Their fiery steeds, and shook the floating reins.
Soon with the din of rattling cars was fill'd
The sounding Hippodrome, and clouds of dust
Ascending tainted the fresh breath of morn.

Now mix'd, and press'd together, on they drove,
Nor spared the smarting lash ; impatient each
To clear his chariot, and outstrip the throng
Of clashing axles, and short blowing steeds,
They panted on each other's necks, and threw
On each contiguous yoke the milky foam.

But to the pillar as he nearer drew,
Orestes, reining in the nearest steed,
While in a larger scope, with loosen'd reins,
And lash'd up to their speed, the others flew,
Turn'd swift around the goal his grazing wheel.

As yet erect, upon their whirling orbs
Roll'd every chariot, till the hard-mouthed steeds
That drew the Thracian car, unmaster'd broke
With violence away, and turning short
(When o'er the Hippodrome, with winged speed,
They had completed now the seventh career,)
Dash'd their wild foreheads 'gainst the Libyan car.
From this one luckless chance a train of ills
Succeeding, rudely on each other fell
Horses and charioteers, and soon was fill'd
With wrecks of shatter'd cars the Phocian plain.

This seen, the Athenian, with consummate art,
His course obliquely veer'd, and steering wide
With steady rein, the wild commotion pass'd
Of tumbling chariots and tumultuous steeds.
Next, and, though last, yet full of confidence
And hopes of victory, Orestes came ;
But when he saw of his antagonists
Him only now remaining, to his mares
Anxious he rais'd his stimulating voice.
And now with equal fronts abreast they drove,
Now with alternate momentary pride
Beyond each other push'd their stretching steeds.

Erect Orestes, and erect his car
Through all the number'd courses now had stood
But luckless in the last, as round the goal
The wheeling courser turn'd, the hither rein
Imprudent he relax'd, and on the stone

The shatter'd axle dashing, from the wheels
Fell headlong, hamper'd in the tangling reins.
The frightened mares flew divers o'er the course.

The throng'd assembly, when they saw the Chief
Hurl'd from his chariot, with compassion mov'd,
His youth deplored ; deplored him, glorious late
For mighty deeds, now doom'd to mighty woes,
Now dragg'd along the dust, his feet in air :
Till hasting to his aid, and scarce at length
The frantic mares restraining, from the reins
The charioteers releas'd him, and convey'd
With wounds and gore disfigur'd, to his friends.
*The just Amphictyons on the Athenian steeds
The Delphic laurel solemnly conferr'd.*

In a political view—seldom lost sight of by a Greek—these games were productive of no slight advantages. Being sacred to Jupiter, they protected the inhabitants of Elis against all the calamities of war, and the fear of displeasing the god of thunder kept all parties honest. Greece was also generally short of horses, and nothing was so likely to encourage the breed of them as the emulation raised amongst the different states—to say nothing of the great circulation of money, for the olive crown was purchased at a great expense. By these games being celebrated at the beginning of every fifth year, they settled their chronology and dates ; and a great part of the traditional history of their country rests upon their base, for they lasted one thousand years. As for the reward, as I have before stated, it was nothing to the pocket, but the honour was above all price, as the following anecdote will show. A Spartan was offered a

large sum to sell a battle at the Olympic games. Having beaten his man with much difficulty, he was asked what he should gain by such a victory? 'I shall have the honour,' said he, 'of being posted before my king in battle.' As a further proof of the moral effect of these contentions for honour, it is stated in history, that when the conquerors returned to their native cities, they made their entry through a breach in the walls—by which was implied, that cities inhabited by such men had no need of walls. This, however, was not all. Greece was always fond of pomp and splendour, and the celebration of these games suited their taste. The feasts of victory—the entertainments to the winners—were magnificent in the extreme, and the city of Olympia (the Newmarket of the day) was enriched by all the works of art.

The poet says,

How few the joys that *every* bosom shares !

and thus it has been with gentleman coachmanship. In Greece it was the amusement of kings, whose fame was immortalised by the first poets of the heroic age. 'The candidate *there*,' says Gibbon, 'might pursue the footsteps of Diomede and Menelaus, and conduct his own horses in the rapid career. His fame was chanted in lyric strains more durable than monuments of brass or marble ; but a *senator of Rome*, or even a citizen, conscious of his dignity, would have blushed to expose his person or his horses in a Roman circus. Here the reins were abandoned to servile hands ; and if the profits of a favourite charioteer sometimes exceeded those of an advo-

cate, they were considered as the effects of popular extravagance and the high wages of a disgraceful profession.' I do not attempt to controvert such authority, but it must be borne in mind that the interest taken in the charioteers of Rome shook the very foundations of the government.

I now take leave of ancient coachmanship. To every one Nature has given some distinguishing bias, and the greater part of mankind are endowed with a capacity for performing, in some degree, in the different exercises invented for our amusement ; but of this fact my readers may be assured, that, *until within the last hundred years, the world never saw a coachman !* As to those of whom I have just been speaking, the form of their carriages, and the mode of putting their horses to them, were obstacles to anything like fine execution in the art ; and, although brave and daring in the race, we may be assured they were clumsy fellows with the ribbons, and as to their use of the whip, it was only adapted to pig-driving.

There is one requisite to make a man, whether gentle or simple, a coachman, and that is what we call on the road, '*hands*.'¹ By these I do not mean two mutton-fists that would be very useful to a coalheaver, but a certain faculty of touch—regulated doubtless by the nervous influence—the possession or the non-possession of which makes the difference between a good and a bad horseman. No man with a hard, heavy hand can ever

¹ Among the ancients, the proper motion of the hands was considered a great accomplishment—so much so, that an awkward disposition of them would have spoiled the noblest piece of oratory at Athens and Rome.

make a jockey or a coachman ; and if an amateur, the sooner he gives up the attempt the better. Neither will a nervous man ever excel, or even be safe on a coach-box ; for strong nerve and presence of mind are very often called into action there.

I have more than once amused myself with thinking, that if a Diet were formed, before whom gentlemen coachmen were to be examined previous to their being considered *safe*, it would not be amiss if they were to put them to the following test :—Let the harness of four horses be taken to pieces—strap from strap—and then let the pupil be directed to put it together again in their presence. If he succeeded, I should have no hesitation in pronouncing him safe, as his experience on the road must have been considerable.

If a man could bequeath his experience to his heirs as an heirloom to his estate, what lots of money would be saved to the young ones ! In the purchase of coach horses some gentlemen coachmen whom I could name have sunk little fortunes. A hint or two may not be amiss here.

A gentleman should never purchase a horse for his team without a good trial of his mouth and temper. With respect to the first—to be perfect, he should be almost what we call on the road ‘a cheek horse ;’ that is to say, he should require very little curb ; should always be at play with his bit, and yet not afraid of it ; and each side of his mouth should be alike. To a gentleman’s leader a good mouth is everything, and then the higher his courage is the safer he is to drive. With stage-coach

horses, which are always running home, mouth is not of so much consequence, as there is no turning and twisting, as in gentleman's work, which is often in a crowd. A gentleman's leader that requires the whip should be discharged—a whistle, or a click with the tongue, should make him spring to his collar in an instant.

Wheel-horses also that are anything like perfect are very difficult to be procured, and, after all, they are the sheet-anchor of the drag. If they are steady, and will hold well, a coachman may almost set his leaders at defiance; but if they are all 'rum ones' together, danger is ever at hand. Several of my driving friends prefer purchasing their wheelers out of coaches after they have been about six months in regular work, and it is by no means a bad plan. For the sum of sixty to eighty guineas they may generally pick the flower of any man's stock, and a good, sound, well-broke coach horse cannot be said to be dear at that price.

Gentlemen's coach horses should always be high in flesh, as it is a great set-off to their appearance, and, if the flesh be good, it is no obstacle to pace. A sound five-year-old horse, with good legs and feet to begin with, *and only driven in harness*, will, on an average, last from six to ten years in gentleman's work, and then be very useful for other purposes. He is generally never so well as when in his regular work; but if a screw gets loose, a winter's run without his shoes, and mercurial charges to his legs, will set him up again.

Gentlemen coachmen go along now at least two miles an hour faster than they did fifteen years ago. This has

led to a different sort of coach horse, and the change is much for the better. The great Yorkshire horse is become obsolete, and those nearly, or quite, thoroughbred have taken their place. The great size and long action of the former rendered them unpleasant to drive; whereas the smartness and activity of the latter render them quite delightful; and—which is by no means ungrateful to the driver—they appear to be going faster than they really are.

A gentleman's coaching establishment should not be lower than ten horses. These will ensure him two teams, and two rest-horses in case of accidents which, in the most careful hands, will sometimes occur. He should have two complete sets of harness for his own work, as also one for his break—an article he should never be without. A head coachman who knows his business, and two strong helpers under him, will keep all things clean and in their places.

In gentleman's work, as well as on the road, a toolbox is a necessary appendage, to keep the drag moving. It should contain a strong screw-wrench; wheel and spring clips; a spring shackle or two, with bolts and nuts; two chains—one for a trace, and the other shorter, with a ring at one end and hook at the other, in case of a tug giving way: and a short strap, *with a buckle at each end*, should always be carried with a coach, as in case of almost any part of the reins, or indeed most parts of the harness, breaking, it comes into use in a moment. The coachman should have it in his pocket.

Before I take leave of gentlemen coachmen, I must

mention one amateur whom I have not hitherto noticed, in consequence of his not having belonged to either of the clubs I have been speaking of, or driving a team of his own. I allude to Mr. John Willan—a very capital performer, and very often at work on the road, as also on several of our swell drags, in the high London season. Mr. Willan is a very powerful man, and though young in years is full of experience, and can put four horses together as well as any man going. Mr. Willan, in short, is good at everything: he is good over a country; good at cricket; good over the mahogany; and, to sum up the whole—a *good fellow altogether*.

I may be allowed also to conclude with two or three hints, not before mentioned. With a cantering leader, or one that frets, young coachmen are apt, on all occasions, to pull him back and endeavour to get him into his trot, *by the bit*; whereas that generally fails, if it do not make him worse, by bringing him back on his bar. The scientific way is to pull him back by his harness; that is, to keep the wheelers back, so that he may feel *his collar and the bit* at the same time, which will tend to soothe his temper.

Speaking of bars, it is well to observe, that where the bars can go the coach can go, as they are wider than the wheels. If they are cleared, therefore, all is safe. The swing bar we use in coaches is an excellent invention, as a horse works in it from either shoulder, and of course quite at his ease.

Moping a hot leader has sometimes a good effect. I once bought a capital coach horse for twenty-six pounds

because no one could drive him ; and as he had broken two carriages, he was the terror of the neighbourhood. I moped him, and could drive him, with the greatest safety, either leader or at wheel.

I have one more hint to offer. When all four horses are to be restrained *at once*, almost all coachmen draw all the reins through their fingers at the same moment. This is not the way to do it ; for here *your horses' mouths are lost*. The coachman should change his hands thus : he should open the fingers of his right hand and put the reins into them, about two inches in front of his left hand, and then catch them again with his left by passing it beyond his right. By this plan, his horses' mouths, as I said before, are *not lost*, which they would otherwise be. I am indebted to Jack Peer for this wrinkle, which I briefly noticed in my last.

I have never met with more than one coachman who drives with a *full hand*, and that is Mr. Hunt, who horses and drives an Epsom coach. With a full hand, every rein passes singly through the fingers, which is not the case on the general plan. There is one advantage (with long wheel reins) in this method—the *near wheeler's rein is not covered by the off leader's* ; but this is more than counterbalanced by the comparatively trifling power a man has in his little finger, which must mainly resist the operation of the off leader's rein. Were it not for this, an advantage would attend it. On my asking Mr. Hunt why he drove in this way, he replied, that he had a very fat round hand, and he felt it more convenient.

APPENDIX A.

SOME ROAD SLANG TERMS.

I. OF HORSES.

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| Cattle, prads, tits | . | Horses. |
| Cocktails | . . | Crossbred ones. |
| Wheeler | . . | At wheel. |
| Leader | . . | In front of wheeler. |
| Bolter. | . . | A runaway 'oss. |
| Team | . . | The flumber of horses you drive, generally with reference to four. |
| Pickaxe team or unicorn | } . | Three. |
| Bo-kickers | . . | Kickers all round ; real brutes. |
| A cheek horse | . . | One requiring little curb. |
| Milling | . . | Kicking. |
| Three blind uns and a bolter | } . | A badish team. |
| Jumping | . . | A wheeler cantering or feeling the pressure on him. |
| Moping | . . | Blinding. |
| Fanning | . . | Whipping. |
| Springing | . . | Galloping. |
| Chopping | . . | Hitting a horse with the whip on the thigh. |
| Towelling | . . | Flogging. |
| Pointing | . . | Hitting a wheeler with the point of the whip. |
| Queer ones | . . | Subject to the megrims. |
| Under the whip | . . | The off side. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Whip hand . . . | Right hand. |
| Up to their bits . . . | Going straight |
| Carrying the bar . . . | The freer horse's bar being an inch or two before his partner's. |
| Shouldering the pole . . . | Pushing it against his partner. |
| Hanging off . . . | The opposite. |
| Poling-up or pole-piecing } . . . | Fastening horses to the pole. |
| Coupling-up . . . | Fastening the coupling reins. |

2. OF HARNESS.

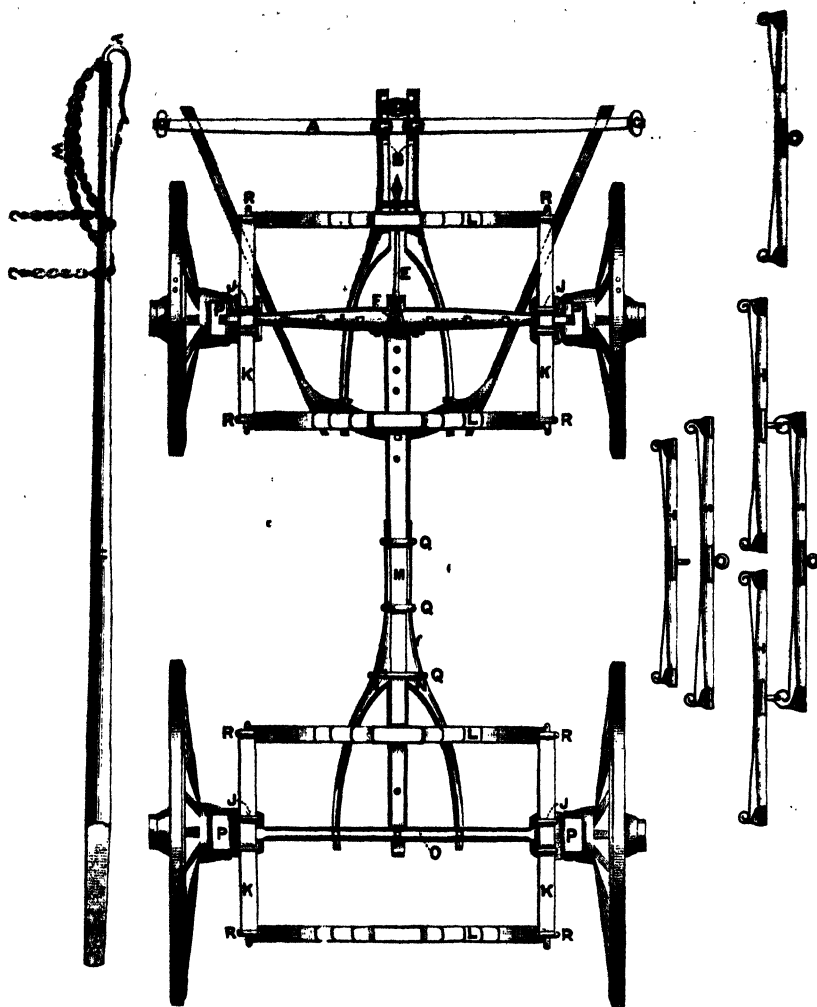
| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Leathers . . . | Harness. |
| Lapping traces . . . | The inside trace of one leader passing inside that of the other and returning to his own bar. |
| Crossing traces . . . | The inside trace of one leader fastening to the inside bar of his partner. |
| Terrets . . . | Rings through which your reins run. |
| Head terrets ¹ . . . | Between the wheelers' ears through which your leaders' reins run. (The invention of Lord Hawke.) |
| Guide terrets . . . | On the wheelers' pads through which your lead traces run. <i>reins</i> |
| Pole pieces . . . | Pole straps or chains. |
| Neckings . . . | To fasten the hames a-top. |
| Throat hasps . . . | To the hames through a ring on which the pole piece goes. |
| Ribbons . . . | Reins. |
| Coupling reins . . . | The crossed inner reins. |
| Draught or leading reins } . . . | The outer reins, the fellows to the coupling reins. |
| Throat lashing . . . | Passing a (leader's) coupling rein through a ring on his own throat lash previous to its being buckled to his partner's. |

¹ These are now very generally given up in favour of rings or terrets on the outside of the wheelers' head-piece.

3. OF A COACH.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| A drag . . . | A gentleman's coach. |
| A mail . . . | Carrying the mails and a limited number of passengers. |
| A stage . . . | A coach appointed for the conveyance of travellers and parcels from one city or town to another. |
| Butterflies . . . | Summer coaches. |
| To mile (miled) . . . | To rent at per mile. |
| No life in the coach . . . | When travelling over deep or gravelly roads. |
| Coach alive. . . | The opposite. |
| The mad woman. . . | An empty coach. |
| Fore and hind boot . . . | Receptacles for luggage. |
| Under carriage ¹ . . . | The foundation. |
| Telegraph springs . . . | Coach springs or beds, the invention of Mr. Warde of Squerries, and first used on the Manchester 'Telegraph,' whence the name. |
| Box seat . . . | 2s. 6d. extra now, and worth it too. |
| Gammon board . . . | The seat in front on the roof. |
| Backgammon board . . . | The seat behind on the roof. |
| Futchells . . . | Fastening the splinter bar to the axletree bed ; the pole is fastened between the two centre ones. |
| Perch . . . | Connecting the fore and hind axletrees. |
| Perch bolt . . . | Goes through the fore axletree bed and fore transom, holding the perch. |
| Bolt hole . . . | For perch bolt. |
| Transom plates . . . | Above and below the axletree beds. |
| Felly, and felloes or fellies | The singular and plural denominating the quarters of the wheel. |
| Tire . . . | |
| | The iron hooping confining the felloes. |

¹ See woodcut on next page.



A Splinter bar
 BB Inside futchels
 CC Outside futchels
 D Bridge plate
 E Perch bolt stay
 F Perch bolt
 GGGG Roller bolts
 HH Sway bar

I Transom (axletree
 bed under transom)
 JJJJ Spring clips
 KKKK Carriage springs
 LLLLL Body springs
 M Perch
 NN Perch wings
 O Hind axletree bed
 PPPP Cartoux

QQQ Perch hoops
 RRRR } Spring shackles
 RRRR }
 SS Main bars
 TTT Leading bars
 U Pole
 V Pole hook
 W Pole chains
 X Unicorn bar¹

¹ A better plan for this is to have a ring on to one of the ordinary spare swingle bars, which then answers the double purpose of a swingle or a unicorn bar.

- Skid or slipper . . . An iron with flanges retained by a chain from the perch or axle, which, fitting under the hind wheel prevents its revolving, and so locks the wheel.
- To unskid To take this off.
- The brake An apparatus which by pressure against the tire of the wheel retards the motion of the coach : invented by Mr. Tongue.
- To lock or chain a wheel, } Either with skid or a chain or both ; the latter is used hooked round the felly or the spoke of the wheel.
- Splinter or wheel bar . From which the wheelers pull.
- Roller bolts On the splinter bar, and on which the wheeler's traces are fastened.
- Main bar Hangs on to the pole head.
- Swing or swingle bars . From which the leaders' four traces pull. These hang from each end of the main bar.
- Three feet of tin . . . The regulation coach horn.
- A tool, a crop, the polished yew } A whip.
- The docker A short whip kept handy by the 'smock-frock' and low sort.
- Points Pieces of ready knotted whiplcord for the whip.
- The cap and thumb ferule } Of whip ; introduced by Sir Henry Peyton.
- A case An upset or smash.
- A sack wanting . . . After a case.
- Quarters and false quarters } Ruts, and very deep ruts.
- Pushing ground, or a long fall of ground, or falling ground } A long hill in your favour.
- Collar work Uphill work.
- Feather-edging it . . Driving near to anything.

4. OF COACHMEN.

| | |
|--|--|
| A dragsman . . . | A coachman. |
| An artist or a workman | Good coachman. |
| Knights of the whip, } whips, Jehus, } coachee } | Coachmen. |
| A spoon or lame hand . | A bad one. |
| A fresh-catched } coachman } | One just got to work. |
| A wap-john . . . | A gentleman's coachman. |
| Drivers . . . | Not coachmen. |
| Jarvey . . . | A slow and inelegant one. |
| A bang-up or a slap- } up coachman } | Tip-top, |
| A waste-butt sort of } fellow } | One of the pull-up-at-every-inn sort. |
| Sprung . . . | Tipsy. |
| To lie still . . . | When sick. |
| To keep your right } hand down } | To keep sober. |
| To take off your bars . | To resign the road. |
| Chin work . . . | Driving with your hands well up to your face. |
| Time . . . | To keep which is the test of an artist— and to be kept to a minute : not to a <i>minute or two</i> , as a wag said to Nim- rod one day. |
| To draw or back draw . | To incline your thong after a hit so as to bring it up to hand. |
| Double thonging . | Hitting your wheelers with your thong twisted. |
| A lot of sort . . . | Expressive of high approval. |
| Under- and over- } hand strokes } | Directing your points above or below the bar. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Stage . . . | . The distance run with the same team. |
| Natty . . . | . Neat. |
| Set-out . . . | . Turn-out. |
| Getting hanged . | . Your thong catching in your bar. |
| A bite. . . . | . A wet thong getting hanged. |
| Short shillings . | . Fares that coachmen are allowed not to put on the way-bill—generally the first stage off the stones. |
| To kick . . . | . To take presents from the passengers. |
| Shouldering . . | . Taking a fare not on the way-bill, and unknown to the proprietors. |
| A shoulder-stick, a bit of fish, or a short one | } A passenger not on the way-bill. |
| A scaly one . . | . A shabby pay. |
| Tipping the double | . Not paying at all. |
| A flash of lightning, a drop of short, or don't stop to mix it | } A glass of spirits neat. |
| Benjamins and upper benjamins | } Great coats. |
| Dressing . . . | . Putting on great coats and shawls. |
| A good bit of broad cloth or neatish togger | } Good clothes. |
| A lily shallow . | . A white hat (flat, low crowned). |
| A white castor . | . A white hat. |
| The Beaufort . . | . Smaller hat with narrow rim. |
| The Anglesea . . | . One higher, and very fore and aft in brim. |
| A drab surtout . | . A drab frock. |
| Belchers . . . | . Two or three times round your neck handkerchiefs. |
| A little of the spot about the neck | } Having on a bird's-eye fogle. |

- A pretty bit of muslin . A well-dressed woman.
A trump . . . A kind-hearted master.
The tormentor . . . One always on the look-out.
Hands . . . A certain faculty of touch requisite for
an artist.
Handling the ribbons . Driving.
Driving with a full hand Having the reins passing through the
fingers singly.
A 'clear dark' night . A night quite dark and black.
Having a bit of the } Wearing driving clothes such as a box-
drag about you } coat or benjamin, or a belcher with a
bit of spot about the neck.
The shooter . . The guard.
The sweater ' . A young mail guard, one in training.
The sweating shop . The rendezvous in the G.P.O.

APPENDIX B.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAIL GUARDS.

1. The guard is intrusted with the care of the letter bags, and he is to be answerable at his peril for the security, safe conduct, and delivery of them sealed.

2. He is not to quit or desert the mail or bags of letters, or suffer any loitering or unnecessary stopping at public-houses, or other misspending of time upon the road, or neglect to give information of such misconduct on the part of the coachman ; if he does he will be liable to be taken before a Justice of the Peace, and committed to prison with hard labour for one month ; and he is subject to all other punishments and penalties which the laws (as specified in the several Acts of Parliament relative to the Post Office) have hitherto inflicted upon post riders who have neglected their duty.

3. If in post towns, he, on any account, collects or delivers letters or packets, or does so upon the road (except in some particular cases, where the superior officers of the district or postmaster are authorised to order it), he will be liable to an information before a Justice of the Peace, and to the payment of 10s. for every letter, agreeable to an Act of Parliament passed in the first year of the reign of his Majesty George III., and will be dismissed the service.

4. The guard is to behave with civility to passengers, and to assist the coachman on any occasions that are consistent with his situation as protector of the mails, and do not take him out of sight of the place where they are deposited.

5. He is on no account whatever to give up his station to

another person. He is to take care his fire-arms are kept in clean and good condition, that they are always properly loaded and primed when on duty, and on no account whatever to be wantonly discharging his blunderbuss or pistol as the carriage is going along the road or through a town; for every such offence he forfeits five pounds, agreeably to an Act of Parliament. He is also to draw the charge of them as soon as he has ended his journey.

6. He is to sound his horn as a signal for carriages to turn out of the way upon the approach of the mail-coach, also to warn turnpike men of its coming, that no unnecessary delay may be occasioned, and likewise to prepare postmasters against its arrival, and horse-keepers to bring out their horses at each of the changing places; and he is to sound it always as a signal to passengers when the time is expired that is allowed in the time bill for their stopping to refresh, and use his utmost exertions to prevent delay in all cases whatever.

7. It is the guard's duty to see the time bill is justly dated and signed at every place, and where he cannot obtain the postmaster's date and signature, to do it correctly himself; to insert the number of passengers travelling by the coach, for which a space is provided, and to deliver it carefully to the guard who succeeds him at the end of his journey, or to the postmaster at the place where the route of the mail-coach ends.

8. He must be very careful of the timepiece and time bill, and if either should at any time be broken, torn, or lost, immediate notice must be given at the General Post Office, or the case communicated to the postmaster of the nearest place, that he may report the same.

9. Guards will be suspended and otherwise punished who neglect to deliver the bye bags properly, which, for want of better attention, have been frequently carried beyond their distance, and sometimes even brought up to London.

10. Drunkenness or disobedience of official orders will be punished with dismissal.

11. The guard is to prevent, if possible, any more passengers being conveyed than the contract allows, and if a guard neglect to give immediate notice of any violation of this article, with an account of the parties who are accessory to it, it will be considered as a very material breach of his duty, and he will be punished accordingly.

12. It is a very necessary part of his duty to report the earliest intelligence of all accidents, delays, or obstructions, of inattention or want of readiness in horse-keepers, of misconduct in any of the parties concerned in the performance of the duty, and of all occurrences whatever that have a tendency to impede the progress of the mail-coach, or may in any respect be proper to be communicated. He will, if a mail-coach break down, describe what particular part broke, on his bill; and the next day, as soon as possible, by letter give information how it happened, and what damage was done.

13. If the mail-coach break down on its way to London, and it cannot be repaired in half-an-hour, or in such time that the mail may arrive at the Post Office by its proper time, the guard is to ride on with it by horse or chaise. The postmasters and contractors have directions to furnish such chaise or horse, which the Postmaster-General will pay for the use of. The guard must do all his business at the different offices, and his road business, and take care that he performs his journey in the same time as if the coach travelled.

14. If the mail-coach should fail between stage and stage, the guard is to press one of the mail-coach horses, and ride on to the next stage with it.

15. If in travelling from London an accident happens, he is to use all possible expedition in repairing the coach, and if it cannot be done in an hour or an hour and a half, as the circumstances of that particular road will allow, the guard must take chaise to forward the mail.

16. Guards are on no account to carry parcels, whether for private use or for sale; and are to permit mail-coach con-

tractors or postmasters to examine their mail box, and see their time bill.

17. It is a guard's duty to report if horses are unfit for the service, or if the harness and reins are bad.

18. It is a guard's duty always to have a box of tools complete, according to the several articles enumerated below ;¹ also a blunderbuss and case, a pair of pistols and holsters, a powder horn, bullet mould, screwdriver, touch-hole picker, and lock for the mail-box, and also a double or long spreading bar ; and if they do not keep them clean and in the most perfect repair, the inspector will report it, and he will be punished for his neglect.

19. In case of any accident that occasions the coach to be delayed in its progress, it must be the guard's duty to see that on the contractor's refusal, the guards are to get horses elsewhere, and send an immediate account of the same to this office.

20. The mail box, which on the regular coaches is calculated for the reception of letter bags and such things only as relate to the conveyance of the mail, must be confined entirely to that use, and neither packets, parcels, luggage, or any other description of thing whatever must be put therein.

21. No luggage can be allowed on the roof which interferes with the proper packing and safety of any sacks of letters which the mails are in some cases obliged to carry there. No luggage to be placed on the roof till after the boot is full, and then only that which belongs to passengers. No more than three articles, being portmanteaus or carpet-bags, are on any pretence to be allowed, whether they be large or small, and the largest portmanteau is not to exceed 2 feet 4 inches in length, and 1 foot 6 inches in height. They are never to be placed on each other.

¹ Two trace chains, one pole chain, two tug chains, one hatchet, one strong hammer, one wrench ditto, one small saw, one drift pin, one large spike bit, two gimlets, one main bar, shackles, bolts, clips, nuts, worms, screws, nails, cord.

By portmanteau is meant any article made of or covered with leather or hair, and of course all boxes of other materials, bundles, baskets, &c. are to be rejected. The portmanteaus are to be fastened at one end to the seat-irons, and a staple will be placed on each side of the coach, for one strap to go over and further secure them.

22. No person of any description whatever, not being an inspector of the Mail-Coach Department, can be suffered to ride with the guard upon the mail box, on pain of dismissal, unless in order to further some necessary business belonging to the service. An authority to justify the same is issued from the office, with the office seal affixed to it.

23. It is likewise the guard's duty constantly to examine the condition and state of the mail-coaches, particularly of such spare coach or coaches as stand upon any part of the ground they work, and see that they are properly cleaned and taken care of, and to report any deficiencies or imperfections in them, and each guard is to be accountable for whatever damage the coaches may sustain that are under his care, and also for the loss of all seats, lamps, windows, or articles of any kind.

24. If at any time the coaches are not provided with the best lamps and lights, the guards must report the same.

25. They must never leave their mail box unlocked when the mail is therein, or take their lock off when the guards are changed, till the succeeding guard has put his lock thereon.

26. The guards are on no account to permit passengers for mere amusement to drive the mail-coaches. If a remonstrance fails of having the proper effect, the circumstances are to be reported on the time bill, that the penalty the law directs may be inflicted on the coachman. Should the guards neglect to report the circumstance, they will be suspended.

APPENDIX C.

MEASUREMENTS OF THE ROADS OUT OF LONDON.

I. The KENT ROADS (with the exception of the road to Woolwich through Vauxhall) are measured from *the Surrey side of London Bridge* through Great Dover Street.

II. The PORTSMOUTH ROAD, and those branching from it, are measured from the *Stones End in the Borough* near the Queen's Bench Prison, according to the milestones.

III. The ISLE OF WIGHT ROADS are measured from *Cowes*.

IV. The CROYDON, REIGATE, EPSOM, AND BRIGHTON ROADS are measured from the *Surrey side of Westminster Bridge* and from the 'Standard' in Cornhill. The milestones are generally numbered from both these places.

V. The WINCHESTER AND SOUTHAMPTON, DORSETSHIRE, DEVONSHIRE, CORNWALL, WILTSHIRE, SOMERSETSHIRE, and all the roads in the south-west of the kingdom are measured from *Hyde Park Corner* through Brentford.

VI. The UXBRIDGE, EDGWARE, BIRMINGHAM, SHREWSBURY, and most of the roads in the north-western parts of the kingdom are measured from where *Tyburn turnpike* formerly stood, at the top of Oxford Street.

The HIGHGATE AND HAMPSTEAD ROADS are measured from Holborn Bars, near Gray's Inn Lane, and from the bottom of Oxford Street, where St. Giles' Pound formerly stood.

VII. The BARNET ROAD, and all the roads in the north and some of the roads in the north-west of the kingdom, are measured from the place where *Hick's Hall* formerly stood,

viz. at the end of St. John Lane, St. John Street, West Smithfield. A stone in front of the houses has an inscription pointing out the spot.

VIII. The WARE AND HUNTINGDON ROADS, with the branches therefrom, are measured from *Shoreditch Church*, but the milestones are measured from this standard no farther northward than Alconbury Hill, where these roads join the Great North Road as measured from Hick's Hall.

IX. The ESSEX ROADS are measured from *Whitechapel Church*.

